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FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING SUCCESS  
10-PART BECOME A SUCCESSFUL COACH GIFT SERIES

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# MAP IS NOT TERRITORY

PART 4 OF 10



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THE BEST QUESTION I KNOW IS,

**'WHAT WOULD I**

**LOVE**

**TO DO'**

I DON'T ALWAYS KNOW

**THE ANSWER,**

BUT IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO START.

Sharon Pearson

## SUCCESS PRINCIPLES OF COACHING

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In coaching, as in all things in life, there are concepts – principles – that when adopted enable us to experience better results than if we're without them.

At the Foundations of Coaching Success Training, you get a chance to go through these principles thoroughly – they are important foundation principles upon which other concepts can be built.

### **SUCCESS PRINCIPLE NO. 4** **THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY**

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NO MATTER HOW ACCURATE WE BELIEVE WE ARE BEING,  
WE CANNOT REPRESENT THE WORLD ACCURATELY TO OURSELVES



This theme links to the previous theme. The best map of Melbourne or Sydney or Perth can only ever be a map, it cannot be these cities themselves.

We can only ever re-present the world to ourselves based on our own maps of reality, rather than reality itself.

Your thoughts and the thoughts of your client simply represent reality. They could never be reality itself. Everything is perception.

Your map of the world will be unique to your values, attitudes, beliefs, experiences and stories. No two maps are the same. Even when we think we are on the “same page” we are still talking about our own unique map.

What this means for coaching is the importance of clarity. Your client’s map needs to be defined before we can coach them.

We cannot make assumptions about what a client believes simply because we know what we believe. We cannot assume a client likes something because we do.

Removing assumptions in coaching is about respecting the client’s map of the world and being curious to explore it. It is through this exploration together that we learn what their map is.

It’s when we know their map that we can ask if that map is working for them and getting them the results that they want in their life.

We can’t use ‘logic’ with someone to change their map. We can’t simply see a flaw in someone’s map and point it out and expect them to change.

We must treat their map with respect because on some level their map is working for them. It might keep them safe from hurt, or keep them feeling happy, or comfortable. Whatever it gives them, it means they will continue with that map regardless of its flaws.

Think about someone who is constantly late to work. They know logically they need to be on time. Yet they continue to be late, day after day.

Logic isn’t working. If we get curious about how being late is working for them, we learn much about their map.

If someone is late we could ask them, “How is this working for you?”

We might discover that whenever they are on time a boss gives them too much work, or they miss getting their kids to school, or they hit more traffic, or they believe that people who are on time are losers...

The possibilities are as endless as there are people on the planet.

It doesn’t matter what we think of their beliefs, or their map. What matter is if that map of the world is working for them. We’ve discovered it is, so now we discover what it is costing them. (More on this later in your study.)

We might ask them, “What is this choice costing you?” or “What is this choice preventing you doing?”

They might answer that it costs them promotions, a sense of being able to relax, respect, connection with work mates... Again the list goes on.

When the client realises it is costing them something they come to their own realisation about needing to change their model.

When we look at Meta Dynamics™ we learn that we have around two million bits of information coming at us every second. Yet we can process only 134 bits, or 7 plus or minus 2 chunks of information.

This means that we are constantly deleting, distorting and generalising this information so we can allow in what we consider relevant and leave out what we consider irrelevant.

What we allow in and what we leave out depends on our map of the world.

If we believe the world is a harsh place and people are mean, we will delete evidence of kindness as irrelevant, or 'not really counting' and we will distort kindness as "They didn't mean it," or "They were just saying that," or "They wanted something from me," and we will generalise evidence of hurt as "All people are like that."

We are constantly deleting, distorting and generalising to make sense of our world. The question is: Is what we are leaving out, changing and generalising about working for us?

## **SHOULD WE BE CHANGING?**

### **What we 'filter' out?**

#### **TO GET THE RESULTS WE WANT, DO WE NEED TO CHANGE OUR MAP?**

Everyone is doing this all the time. We can't possibly filter in everything all the time or we would be unable to function.

We would be absolutely overwhelmed by the amount of information coming at our senses. We filter to protect ourselves, yet sometimes what we filter is what we need.

In the example above, someone thought the world was harsh and people were mean. They filtered the information coming at them to support this belief.

What if they changed their belief to; "People are kind and compassionate and have good intentions?" Do you think it would change how they experience their world? Do you think it would alter their map?

Now, they would delete evidence of people not being kind, or distort acts of unkindness to "That's not like them," or "They must be having a bad day," or "Maybe they didn't know what they said," and they would generalise an act of kindness to be evidence that they are always kind.

Do you see how powerful this theme can be in your life and in your role as a coach?

In the exercises and modules ahead you will become able to coach and question someone on their map of the world and assist them to create maps that work for them and get them the results that they are seeking.



When your client shares their map, be willing to validate it as their reality.

If it serves them – that is – it is a close approximation of how things are and it is going to move them towards their desired goals – then validate AND reinforce the map, and coach them to integrate their map i.e. their beliefs, viewpoints, attitudes, actions and choices into the game plan you are designing with them, so that their understandings, learnings, beliefs and everything else they have gathered can become a part of the journey ahead – furthering them feeling validated!





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Edition 1 | Version 1 | 2018

Published by Global Success Institute

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