

Dear Master Coach

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Dear Master Coach: How do you recommend to a client that they make a change when that's an area of life where you, as coach, struggle as well? Have you ever had a client ask, "Do you do that?" and you've had to answer "No?"

***Sincerely,
Still Growing***

Dear Still-Growing: Don't you love what we do? It takes courage. And we can't not grow. As a coach, you know that with no warning, your client could stroll into a session with an agenda that triggers your personal stuff:

- *I need to start saving more money/getting out of debt*
- *I need to lose twenty pounds/start working out more*
- *I need to apologize*
- *I need to figure out LinkedIn/buff up my web presence*
- *I need to pay more attention to my significant other(s)*
- *I need to learn something new/catch up on my continuing education requirements*

Ok that's probably enough because if you're like me you just got triggered.

So here's the Big Question for us as coaches: What will it take to stay at a deep level of listening and curiosity when we hear stuff that brings up our own need to take action, or worse, our own critical voices or shame?

Does it help to know that this experience is normal for good coaches? This is what I do to stay present when it happens:

1. I notice my reaction, and
2. I bookmark it if it feels big to me emotionally or somatically. Personally, I may actually make a quick note to myself in the session and then, I
3. Return my attention to my client.
4. Later I ask myself a few questions about my reaction. Can I live with it? Is it useful? Will it go away? If not, what will I do? And when?
5. And finally, I may even later tell my client that he or she has influenced me.

As for recommending things to my clients, I don't very often. If I'm doing my job well, I'm hearing more "I-coulds" from my clients than they're hearing "you-could/shoulds" from me.

Hope that helps. I have to go to the gym now.

PEB, MC

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