

Coach
SCHOOL

Module 3

Building Rapport

Lorraine Hamilton

Contents

- Part 1.1: Defining rapport
- Part 1.2: Components of a successful coaching relationship
- Part 1.3: Ground rules for coaching
- Part 1.4: Learning context, style and environment
- Part 1.5: Preparing to coach

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

- 1.1** Explain two methods of rapport that can be utilised while coaching
- 1.2** Describe a safe environment that you will set up your coaching business from
- 1.3** Explain two categories that influence the client in coaching

Part 1.1

Defining Rapport

Rapport is the relationship of trust, understanding, respect and safety that you create with a person. If people are in rapport with each other, an environment develops of freedom whereby each person can fully express their ideas and concerns and know that they will be respected. A coaching relationship is like no other, because it is a designed alliance to assist the client wholeheartedly with their agenda. At the centre of this alliance, there needs to be set in place certain coaching fundamentals. Building rapport is one of those fundamentals.

As a coach we create a space of permission and complete allowing, we create a space for our clients to have the discoveries they seek and for them to tap into their own resourcefulness at hand. Clients are resourceful, they have all their answers. Within a safe environment where adequate rapport is attained clients are best able to go within to discover their answers.

The primary focus on initial sessions involves getting to know our clients culture, values, beliefs, primary emotions and building a high degree of trust and respect for our unique clients. As we progress into the later stages such as discovery and helping them to design their ideal future as well as setting goals we can see that the very foundation of this rests on the clients internal world.

If a coach has skipped over the initial first sessions where the predominant amount of building of rapport takes place it can be harder to make this up in the future as well as harder to effectively coach.

Often in a coaching relationship, you want to build rapport as quickly as possible to strengthen the working relationship. This can be done with a number of different strategies based on the work of Mehrabian (1967) who discovered that 55% of the message in communication is determined by your body language, 38% by your voice and only 7% by the content or words that you use.

For this reason when building rapport we break strategies down into three categories:

- Building rapport through **body language**
- Building rapport through **tone**
- Building rapport through **words**

Matching and mirroring our client's body language, tone and words can illustrate that we are on the same page and strengthen the dynamics of the relationship.

One of the key corner stones is building rapport, we do this by understanding our clients including:

- Matching and mirroring their body language, tone and use of words
- Understanding their current reality/ life situation
- Exploring their goals and passions
- Uncovering their long-term vision
- Becoming familiar with their cultural background
- Understanding their values
- Discussing their expectations for the coaching
- Discussing how they would like to be coached.

Part 1.2

Components of a Successful Coaching Relationship

The foundation for successful coaching is the free flow of relevant information. People openly and honestly express their opinions, share their feelings, and articulate their theories. They willingly share their views, even when their ideas are controversial or unpopular. The label we put on this spectacular talent is – “dialogue”. The definition for dialogue is the free flow of meaning between two or more people.

Each of us enters into conversations with our own opinions, feelings, theories and experiences when we meet with a new client. This unique combination of thoughts and feelings makes up our personal pool of meaning. This pool not only informs us but also propels our every action.

When we enter into a crucial life coaching relationship, we don't share the same pool. Our opinions will differ. I can believe one thing, you another. I have one history, you have another.

People who are skilled at dialogue do their best to make it safe for everyone to add their meaning to the shared pool – even ideas at first glance appear controversial, wrong, or at odds with their own beliefs. It is your role as the life coach to do your best to ensure that all ideas find their way into the open.

As the “pool of shared meaning” grows, it helps people in two ways. First, as individuals are exposed to more accurate and relevant information, they make better choices. On the other hand when people purposefully withhold meaning from one another, the shared meaning is dangerously shallow and that the result will be poor outcomes.

Please note that the dialogue is the birthplace of synergy – so the art of effective coaching conversations will be a critical component in building synergy with your client.

The Relationship

It is vital for you to connect with your client. However, how do you do this?

- Get to know one another as people – share personal aspects of one another's lives that may be unknown, yet appropriate to know.
- Share each person's motivations and passions about life and their work.
- Develop common understanding of the purpose of coaching and commit to using the process to work together to achieve the client's goals.
- Establish expectations for the mutual coaching roles each will play in this relationship.
- Discuss the goals or objectives that will be the initial focus of the coaching sessions.
- Ask the client to help share how they want to be coached.

The Rapport –General principles on how to build good rapport:

Establishing rapport is critical to the success of the dialogue in the coaching relationship. Consider this – without rapport, the dialogue between people is likely to be just more “noise”. With rapport – and the trust that usually accompanies it – feedback is much more likely to be appreciated, accepted and used for coaching.

- Be approachable and easy to talk to, take the time to be available to listen and be fully present.
- You may want to offer fifteen minute follow up calls.
- Be a “safe” person who does not hold what people say against them and never engage in reprisal.
- Acknowledge people when they speak, appreciate that their communication may involve personal risk taking.
- Validate their experience through empathetic and reflective listening.
- Be open and authentic in sharing your thoughts and feelings.
- Build and nurture trust in all your relationships.
- Keep all agreements, renegotiate quickly when you see you can't keep your end of an agreement.
- Be congruent in your thoughts, words and actions.

Avoid giving advice

Coaching involves an unusually high level of trust and candor on both sides. Creating and sustaining this environment is what gives coaching its power. To do this as a coach, it involves abandoning many of the normal conventions of conversation in our society and replacing them with high-level, alternative skills, all of them about communicating acceptance and respect.

One of the presuppositions of coaching is the belief that each client has all the resources they need inside them. Underneath this belief are the fundamental principles of choice and self-responsibility. As a result, the more rapport you have with a client, the better you are able to act as a coach in drawing out this intrinsic human resourcefulness. In order to do this, a coach must first believe this to be the case – that the client does actually have all the resources they need. For this reason it is imperative that the coach suspend giving advice.

This is easy to say and to write, but it is probably the single most difficult task for an inexperienced coach. Many people who become coaches have had earlier jobs where they have been paid to give advice. Their professional training has positioned them as specialists and a great deal of their professional identity is invested in being an expert.

For instance, human resource specialists are trained to tell managers what the employment law is and to help them avoid making catastrophic mistakes when hiring and firing staff. Doctors are trained to know more than their patients about the human body. Accountants are trained to interpret balance sheets and to give clients the benefit of their advice on personal finance. However with coaching, this is not the case. This is why a coach is not a mentor or consultant. This is why a coach can often coach on many topics because they have strategies to coach, a process not content and facts.

If the client asks you for advice and you give the advice, you are accepting the accountability and ownership of the issue from the client onto yourself. Clients will ask you and it is your role to ensure that you do not provide the answers for your client. As their coach, you are helping the client to become responsible for their own lives and in finding the solutions of their own problems.

For an inexperienced, coach, the pressure to give advice can be overwhelming and may even bring up a sense of anxiety whereby the inexperienced coach could think in a session:

- “It is my job to find the solutions for this client.”
- “If the client doesn’t change I have failed.”
- “I can’t bear this clients pain and confusion. I need to help her by telling her what she needs to do.”
- “It is so obvious to me that they need to do x, y and z.”

The point here is that you do not need to give advice to build rapport. You also do not need to share your personal stories to build rapport by saying something like “that happened to me too”. It is also important to consider how you respond to the client and avoid using statements like:

- “Its ok, it’s your karma.”
- “Don’t worry time will heal.”
- “There, there.”
- “Pump-up it is not that bad.”
- “You’ll get other chances.”
- “Plenty more pebbles on the beach.”
- “Plenty more fish in the sea.”

What to do if a client asks you for advice

If a client does ask you for advice, there are several things that you can do.

These include:

1. You may choose to turn the question back on the client.

Example

Client says to coach 'What should I do about this problem coach?'

Coach says to client 'What do you think you should do about this problem?'

2. Ask "If you did know?"

Example

Client says to coach 'What should I do about this problem coach?' Coach says to the client 'What do you think you should do about this problem?'

Client says 'I don't know'

Coach says "If you did know what would you do?"

3. Ask what others might do/ or what your future self would do.

Example

Coach says to client 'What do you think you should do about this problem?'

Client says 'I don't know'

Coach says "If you did know"

Client says "I still don't know"

Coach says "What might (*may place their role model here*) someone else do?" (Or what might your future self tell you?)

4. Brainstorm.

Example

Coach says, "I had a previous client who was stuck and didn't know what to do, so we decided to brainstorm alternatives. Would you like to brainstorm some ideas together?"

You must be very subtle when using these approaches and make sure you articulate them in a manner that does not sound like you are parroting your clients words back to them.

Avoid being the rescuer

Most people move into coaching because they want to help people. They truly care and have a desire to make a difference. While coaching offers powerful tools to do this, there is a danger that beginner coaches try to “rescue” their clients. The irony with this, is that by rescuing, you actually dis-empower your clients as they are not learning to take responsibility for themselves. By rescuing, you actively or by implication behave as if you feel they are too frail to solve their problems themselves.

Rescuing implies that the client is a victim and if you act on the impulse to do it, it will for certain undermine the client. If you do rescue, you may also find that the “victim” turns on you if things go wrong.

When you lose faith in the ability of clients to solve their own problems, you are losing faith in the coaching process, thus ensuring it fails. This is why it is so important to avoid all the many ways in which we can subtly dishearten our clients through giving advice or through its close cousin of rescuing.

The rescuing process can sometimes look like this:

Coach carries the burden - The client spills out his or her anxiety and the coach simply listens and empathizes, without asking useful questions to move the client forward. This hand-me-down-love, results in the client feeling temporarily lighter, though without having increased his or her capacity to solve such problems in the future. The coach, by contrast can feel unbearably stressed or burdened with what to do – the coach has allowed the client to successfully transfer all anxiety.

Coach finds the solution - The client asks the coach to find a solution. The client implements the suggested solution and becomes dependent on the coach for answers to similar questions in the future. The coach quickly gets to be seen as managing the client and the client looks outside themselves for answers.

A coach is at risk of rescuing when they find themselves thinking or doing any of the following:

- “What would he/she do without me?”
- “I’m not looking forward to this session, it’ll be around and around the same loop.”
- “I’m tired of hearing the same story.”
- “I don’t think he/she is going to get this right – his/her old pattern is going to assert itself yet again.”
- “Impatience: why can’t he or she just do what they say.”
- Believing that if you were in their shoes you’d do the job better.
- Toying with the idea of actively intervening in the clients system on their behalf.

Part 1.3

Ground Rules For Coaching

Setting and implementing clear rules for the coaching relationship is important for setting the right environment for the client and yourself. Some boundaries and general rules may include session times, session location, in-between coaching calls, confidentiality, payment agreement, sending and receiving emails and telephone calls.

The terms and agreements form for which the coaching is to be offered should be outlined from the beginning of the coaching partnership. Clear contracting enhances and shows respect for, the clients autonomy. A contract helps to ensure the professional nature of the relationship. The contract should be discussed by the coach and client in the first session, and signed by both parties before proceeding.

To ensure the coaching runs smoothly the agreement may cover:

- Fees
- Confidentiality
- Venue
- After hours service
- Frequency and time allocation for the coaching
- Process of referral
- Goals for the coaching
- Expectations and responsibilities of the client and the coach
- Missed sessions
- Process of referral if and when necessary
- Broad details of the coaching relationship
- Duties and responsibilities of each party
- Details of your professional supervision as a life coach
- Goals of coaching
- Means by which goals will be achieved
- The provision and completion of fieldwork
- The setting of boundaries and expectations
- The terms of the coaching relationship
- The provision for renegotiation of contract.

Forms and Agreements

Ensure your forms are well revised, and please, for your contracts have a lawyer check them.

Part 1.4

Learning Context And Style

The approach of coaching can be based on three prominent key factors:

- 1) Awareness
- 2) Action
- 3) Learning

The focus of the coaching is on 'individualized pathways'. It is about keeping the relationship centred on the client's needs, wants, goals and aspirations. For some clients this will mean more one-on-one coaching while other clients may need less one-on-one coaching and more time to reflect on what has been learned in the coaching. Some clients may request that they see you weekly while others are happy to have a coaching session once a month.

Everybody learns and changes differently, your coaching style must accommodate each clients' learning style, learning context and learning environment.

Learning context

This is how you present your conversations in the coaching session.
(This includes individual or group coaching)

Do: Vary your approach to suit your client and their cultural background.
(As mentioned in your module: Values & Cultural Beliefs.)

Do: Share with your client what will happen throughout the first coaching session at the beginning.

Remember the client has their own agenda and this is what you must work with, however you must also be able to guide the conversation into a successful outcome with them. Initially the first coaching session is the only coaching session that the agenda is pre-determined by the coach.

Learning styles

Every client is going to learn and move forward differently in their lives. As their coach you must learn and cater for how they learn best and utilize this.

Do: Add variety to your coaching, use props such as whiteboards, colored pens and paper, and other creative tools.

Do: Ensure there is a mix of tools used throughout the clients coaching sessions including brainstorming, role-playing, time lines, story-telling etc.

The learning environment

Coaches coach from a variety of places, some coaches choose to coach via telephone, email, face-to-face, group as well as in-house coaching.

Do: Wherever you coach you must take into consideration the learning environment that you are creating for the client.

Do: If you choose to have an office you must make sure it is safe, comfortable and confidential for your clients.

And remember: Physical surroundings do matter. What you have in your office is a part of how your client will see you.

For the coaching to be effective the coach must consider the client as an equal person and vice versa. In keeping the relationship equal the client must be made to feel safe and secure within the coaching environment. Remember that the client has come out of their comfort zone into a new environment for the coaching.

Working environment

- As the coach you should keep your working environment professional and simple.
- A big desk and big chairs may look fancy but may not be necessary.
- Simplicity can be beautiful and appropriate - A couple of chairs and a table in between are fine.
- Keep photos and all personal belongings out of sight.
- Have chairs both slightly on a lean to ensure that the eye contact is not direct which may leave the client feeling very uncomfortable.
- Make sure that the room temperature is appropriate, and the lighting is adequate.
- If you need to have pictures keep them positive and uplifting which denote a positive image of coaching.

Other Influential factors

Your clients are going to be influenced by many factors when coming to the coaching. The influence that the environment has on them is one factor of many.

Some other factors which you will need to be aware of are:

- Employment
- Unemployment
- Family & relationships
- Education (Both formal and informal)
- Age
- Gender
- Values

- Beliefs
- Knowledge
- Experience
- Religious beliefs
- Prior experience with coaching
- Health history

Part 1.5

Preparing to Coach

Client Greeting

Before you get comfortable in calling your client by their first name you may like to ask the client their preference for how they would like to be addressed.

When greeting your clients it does not need to be fancy. A normal “Hello John, My name is Mary I am pleased to meet you” is an adequate greeting.

Greeting the clients can be informal:

- “Hello Elle, I’m Helen. Please come in and sit down”.
- “Hi Paul, my name is Amanda. Please have a seat”.
- “Hello Mrs Smith, my name is Roxanne – what name would you like me to call you by?”

Addressing clients by their first name can go a long way towards helping them feel comfortable and accepted. Introducing yourself by your first name can help to break down the barriers of inequality. However, do not assume that because you are feeling comfortable on first name terms that all people are. Ask the client how they want you to address them. Remember to also be aware of cultural issues in greetings.

The first coaching session:

The first coaching session sets the direction of the relationship. It is imperative to build positive rapport from the start. You cannot force a person to like you; neither can you force them to open up to you. They need to enter into the coaching believing that coaching is a tool that can help them.

What you should avoid in the session:

- Avoid restricting the client by placing emphasis on such topics as difficulties, problems, help etc. Eg. Avoid saying “please go ahead and tell me the problem in detail”.
Remember in the early part of this session you are purely building rapport.
- Avoid minimizing their situation with expressions such as “let’s have a chat” or “shall we have a little talk about that?” Coaching is not a chat. You talk, yes, but “chat” carries with it inferences of a social meeting, which is not the purpose of coaching.
-

To think of coaching as a chat degrades the process.

Remember: The first meeting will set the tone for further sessions.

Before the first session consider what preparation you may need to do.

Consider what the main focus will be prior to each session – Initially the first session will be:

- Building rapport
- Client safety
- Professionalism and ethics
- Personal introduction
- Outline of coaching, and what you may offer as their coach
- Exploring the individuals generalized awareness of the problem (G.A.P).

Ending the session

- It is important to start and end the coaching on time, this includes ending in an appropriate manner. When entering into the end of your time with the client make sure you recap the session.
- Avoid introducing anything new toward the end of the coaching session.
- It is important to ask the client to tell you what value they are taking away from the session.
- When closing the coaching make it clear that the time allocated has ended and that the coaching is coming to an end.
- If the client decides to introduce a new item toward the end of the coaching you will have to politely schedule another appointment to address it. You may find that a lot of clients will disclose important things toward the end, show the client respect by honoring the item they have brought up and kindly asking them if you can address it in their next session.

SAMPLE COACHING SESSION

Below is a sample outline of a coach's introduction in the first session:

First Session Foundation Form - Time allocation 1 hour.

Goals of the first session:

1. Build rapport
2. Client safety
3. Professionalism and ethics
4. Personal Introduction
5. Outline coaching
6. Explore client's generalized awareness of the problem (G.A.P)

Name:

Date:

- Welcome the client - ask what the client wishes to be called.
- Explain how the coaching session will go today.
- Give a brief bio of your background, (if unknown).
- Explain the difference between coaching and therapy, consulting, counselling, and mentoring.
- Explain what coaching is – and how I work.
- Explain how I believe that the clients has all of the answers and resources. Explain that I am here as a guide and do not have their answers but can assist them in uncovering them.
- Explain the importance of confidentiality and the reason for signing an agreement.
- Remember to offer water, tea, bathroom etc.
- Ask if they are okay to begin the session, (it is important to gain permission).
- Ask what brings them here today (phrase in the context of “challenges”, not “problems”)
- Explain you may use different tools and techniques, this is because different techniques are suited to different situations and different people
- Continue with coaching session – to discover the client.
- Explain how you would like to be contacted and how you will follow up.
- Complete the session by having the client state 3 action steps.
- Finish the session by asking for the biggest learning or insight the client had in the session.
- Make a time for the next session.

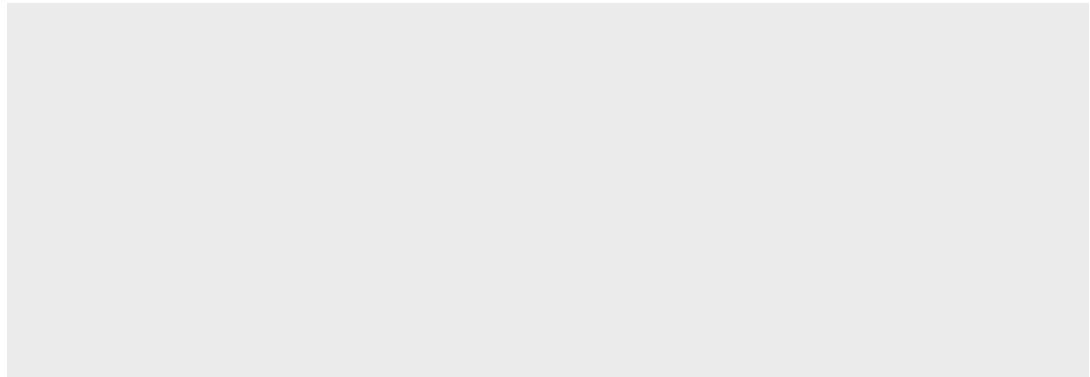
Worksheets

Forms

Your job is to ensure you have the correct forms for your business. This includes:

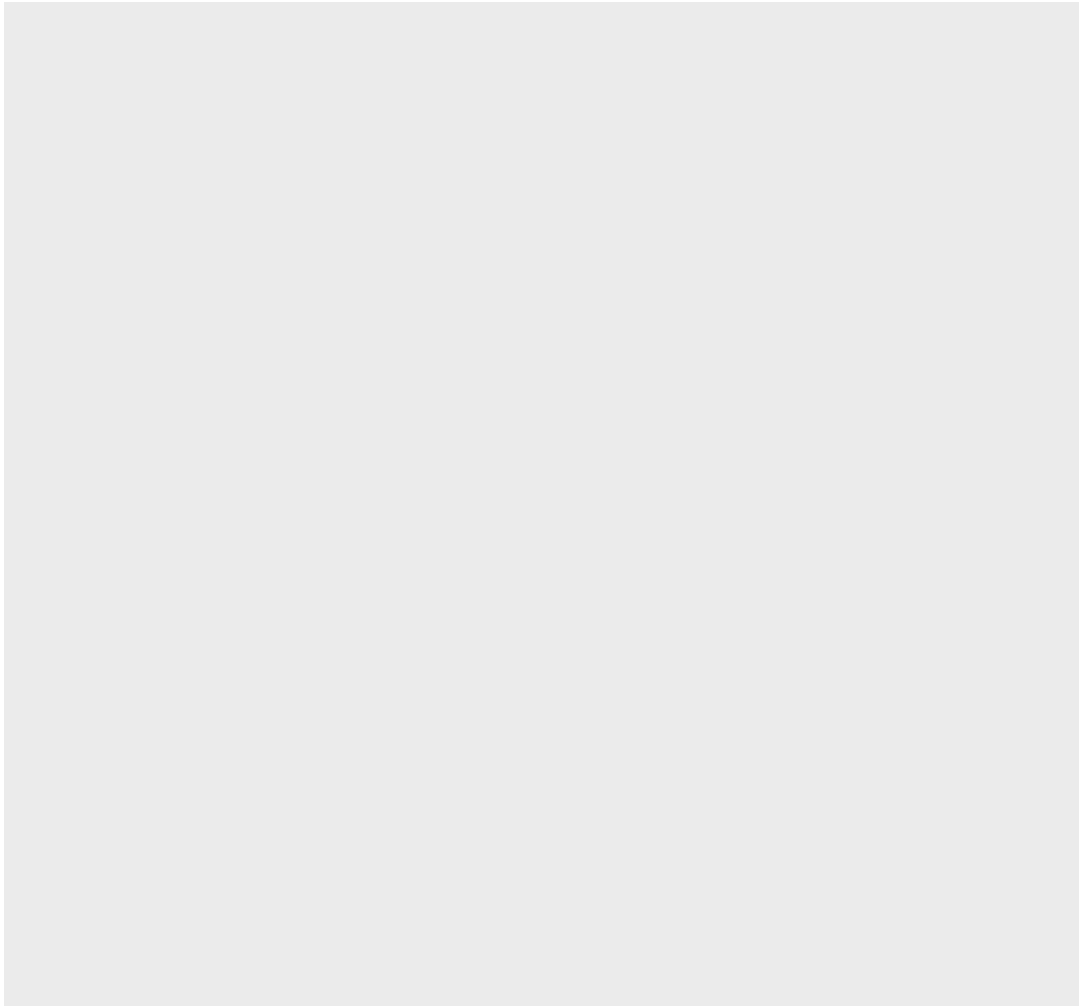
- Coaching Agreement
- Policies & Procedures
- Client Details Form
- Welcome Letter
- Pre-session Template (For your client to complete before your first coaching session together).
- Your first coaching session form (to guide you in your first coaching session)

1. What forms do you not have in place that you need to work on?



Coaching Area

Your next task is to ensure you have the right space to coach in, whether this be from your home office or a clinic. Have you got the required headset? Is your environment free from distractions? Will you be using video if you coach from home? Have you got a nice backdrop so that when you coach from home you have a visually appealing view behind you. Discuss what changes (whether small or large) you need to make to feel comfortable and confident in your coaching space.



Notes

