

2023 Coaching Skills: Coaching Presence—Follow-up Notes

Imagine that the first 3 ICF core competencies are attitudes or mindsets that you use to prepare yourself mentally for a session:

- Ethical thinking (you are paying attention to client welfare and potential risks)
- Adopting a coaching mindset (you believe in your client and their capacities)
- Coaching presence (you are deeply aware and being authentic)

These form a foundation upon which you start employing the in-session skills such as:

- Listening actively (which emerges from coaching presence)
- Evoking awareness (such as asking powerful questions, which emerges from active listening and coaching presence)

So, I hope you can see that coaching presence is very much a lynchpin skill. It is what helps the client feel listened to, and it is what forms the foundation of noticing. We comment on and ask questions about what we notice.

It contains two distinct aspects:

1. Being present

Here, you are in the moment with the client. You are not distracted by the events of your day, your email or stuff on your desk, or the thoughts in your head. Most coaches do something to prepare for the session, such as cleaning their desks, removing pets, shutting down email and social media, meditating, stretching, going for a walk, and ensuring their bio needs are addressed. But, it is more than removing distractions. It is also an intentional focus. You are trying to notice word choice, emotional shifts, consistencies and discrepancies, patterns and links, themes, etc.

2. How you present

Coach self-knowledge is important. You should understand how you come across to others and show up as authentically as possible (with the caveat that all of us are variable). If you are generally serious, or playful, or warm, or demanding, then use those natural qualities. You do not need to be all things to all people, and you will not necessarily be a good fit for all possible clients.