



FOLLOW UP NOTES

Thank you all for a wonderful learning experience. I was pleased to see that everyone seemed interested in the topic and appreciative of my pedagogic approach. I saw, especially in my brief visits to the breakout rooms today, that people appreciated their peers. I strongly believe that you all support and enrich one another's learning and are responsible for doing so. Please keep in touch with one another and with us at Positive Acorn.

The principal lessons from Savoring include:

- Savoring can be done in the past, present, and future, and each of these has a specific name and approach
- We too seldom take the time to savor success and happiness. As coaches, we can build more of this explicitly into the session, such as a positive review of progress or stopping to ask about a specific success in detail
- There are opportunities to work with clients on cultivating a habit of savoring.

Using signals such as memorabilia can be part of this

- Of course, savoring your own life is also a gateway to wellbeing.

Not only is time an obstacle to savoring, but sometimes people believe that basking/luxuriating is selfish, or that we shouldn't dwell in the past or any number of other attitudes that interfere with this process. You can examine this in your own life. Not only will this help you-- potentially-- but may also have a downstream effect on your clients.

The principal lessons from curiosity:

- You can activate your own curiosity. Let your curiosity flow out of what you notice in the moment. If you see a client start to say something and then stop, ask about it. If you have an intuition, ask about it. Be hungry to learn about the client.
- Always harness curiosity on behalf of clients. Do not ask questions to satisfy your own curiosity.



--Curiosity is directly tied to the idea of coaching the person and not the problem. When you are interested in hearing about the client's feelings, learning, processes, preferences, perspectives, and experience, you are coaching the person.

--Keep the knowledge emotion framework in mind

Some concluding thoughts about positive psychology

--Positive psychology is the study of what goes right with people. That is an apt metaphor for solutions-focused coaching—a conversation principally concerned with what goes right with people when things are not problematic, what desirable future is preferred, and what resources people have.

--Positive psychology interventions are mostly created by academics in university laboratories using college students as study participants. This is a reasonable way to investigate psychological phenomena, but it may not yield the most compelling change technologies. For instance, the very scientists who are creating these interventions seldom use them (in my experience), with the exception of those who have a regular mindfulness practice. If I had to bet, I would guess that even those of you who know this material and train it do not engage in these interventions all that often or faithfully. By contrast, many everyday decisions and behaviors people make regarding happiness (having friends over for dinner, attending a play, going to a child's game, reading a book, etc.) have simply not been studied. In my opinion, we should look at the intervention research as a helpful signpost telling us about areas of distinct promise. From here, we can work with clients (and workshop participants) to create plans and paths that make sense to them. In my experience, practitioners are hell-bent on wanting tools but what I am describing is a tool. In fact, the first empirically derived happiness intervention from Michael Fordyce did exactly what I am saying—asked participants to pursue happiness according to their own intuitions. And it worked. Shouldn't that be considered a positive psychology intervention?

-- I believe that positive psychology should be used to inform our coaching presence: humility, confidence, curiosity, integrity, empathy, mindfulness, and self-compassion, to name a few aspects of presence. Each of these is a positive psychology topic, and learning the research can help us be better coaches.

-- Mostly, I argue that the most elegant and organic use of positive psychology in coaching is largely "invisible" to clients. We don't need to mention words such as "strengths" or "happiness" (although it



is fine if we do). Mostly, coaching will just look like coaching and the various tools, research, and frameworks will guide our coaching.

From here

--For those who want to coach professionally (as opposed to those who just want to use some coaching skills in their role as managers, teachers, etc.) I recommend ICF certification. Feel free to look at any of the materials we have provided, consult the ICF website, and—thereafter--ask us questions about the process. We want to hear from you if you get certified.

-- I recommend using the visible learning weeks effectively. Then, take a small break for yourself. Then devote the next three months or so to “re-taking” this entire program. Continue your practice. When you have at least 50 full hours of practice and feel you have some solid mastery of this material, I encourage you to pursue other trainings that might interest you.

Please keep in touch with any future success.

Best,

Robert and the Positive Acorn team