Base Metal...

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Alchemy of Coaching

Introduction

Our concerns are typically greater than our capacity to influence outcomes. Paul explores how we can use a model to reflect on this disparity and learn to make a positive difference for self and client.

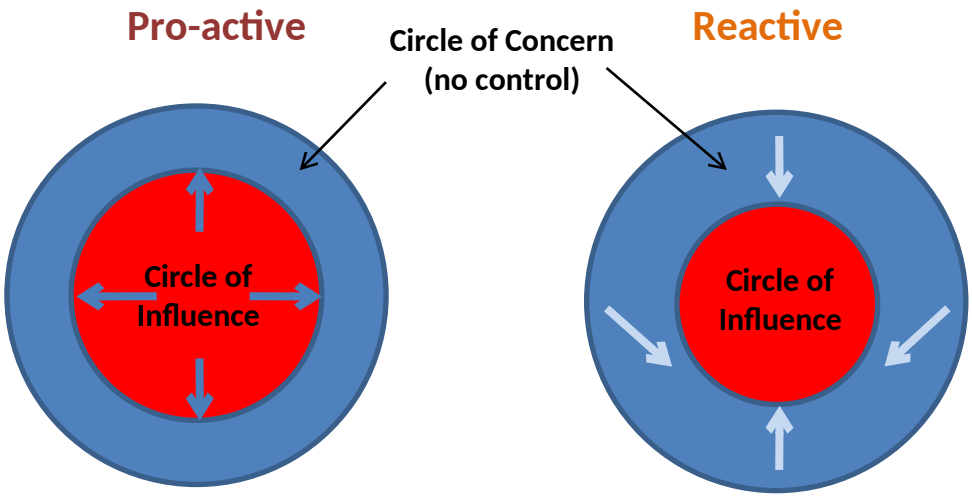
Paul and Ray **The Alchemy team**

Using models

Models are a valuable part of any coach's toolkit, whether as ways of contextualising a presenting issue, providing a structure for reflection or giving direct insight, we all use them in some form. I found myself recently referring to a nice model from Stephen Covey's 'Seven habits' book, when coaching around control: his 'circles of concern'.

Reflecting afterwards, I asked myself how often I apply the models I refer to and utilise in coaching, to my own coaching practice. All too rarely, it seems. How easy it is to allow and indeed nurture the status quo without sufficient challenge or reflection on development, which of course is why all of the major professional bodies require ongoing CPD and supervision as part of maintaining accreditation.

The Covey model is a potentially interesting one here when applied to the coaching space as a coach (though of course, it wasn't originally designed to do that).



I choose to go
I control my feelings
Let's explore alternatives
I can .....

I have to go
He makes me so mad
There's nothing I can do
If only.....

Several potential questions and reflections emerge from this for me:

- As a coach, when might I appropriately choose to be 'pro-active' and where 'reactive'? With what potential consequences?
- What might legitimately be inside the 'Circle of Concern' for me, where I (as the coach) have no control? How can I effectively sit with that, ensuring that such elements do not have a negative effect on the coaching space or the coachee (or indeed me)?
- What sort of scenarios would benefit from me looking to expand my circle of influence, in the service of the coachee?

However definitive or otherwise our answers are to these sorts of questions, it seems to me valuable to reflect on them and consider their implications. If nothing else, having thought about them put me in a better place to use the model in a real, applied situation with a coachee, and if I can gain any other small insight into my own practice, it has been time and effort well spent.

Book review

"The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People - Powerful Lessons in Personal Change", Stephen R. Covey, Simon & Schuster, 1992

When this book was first published in the US in 1989 Rosabeth Moss Kanter described it as "A perfect blend of wisdom, compassion and practical experience" and Anthony Robbins exhorted readers to "use it!". It became a timeless classic. At Alchemy of Coaching we somehow omitted to review it until November 2023; here we are citing it again, as if to make up for lost time. And for good reason: the book is based on principles for life and offers a structure for putting them into practice.

Habit 1 is "Be proactive" - take the initiative; a tool to assist us to do so is Covey's Circle of Influence.

"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People - A 50-Card Deck", Hay House Inc., 2003

A reminder on the box of this card deck reads: "You are not your habits - and you can replace old patterns with new ones!". These cards, grouped in seven sections corresponding to the Seven Habits in the book, provide a highly accessible resource for coaches to use for themselves and with their clients.

Thoughts, ideas and quotations

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit". Aristotle.

"Creative action is one of life's greatest challenges, and so one of its greatest rewards." Geoffrey Petty.

"We must not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time." T. S. Eliot.

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