

Being an Effective “Coachee”:

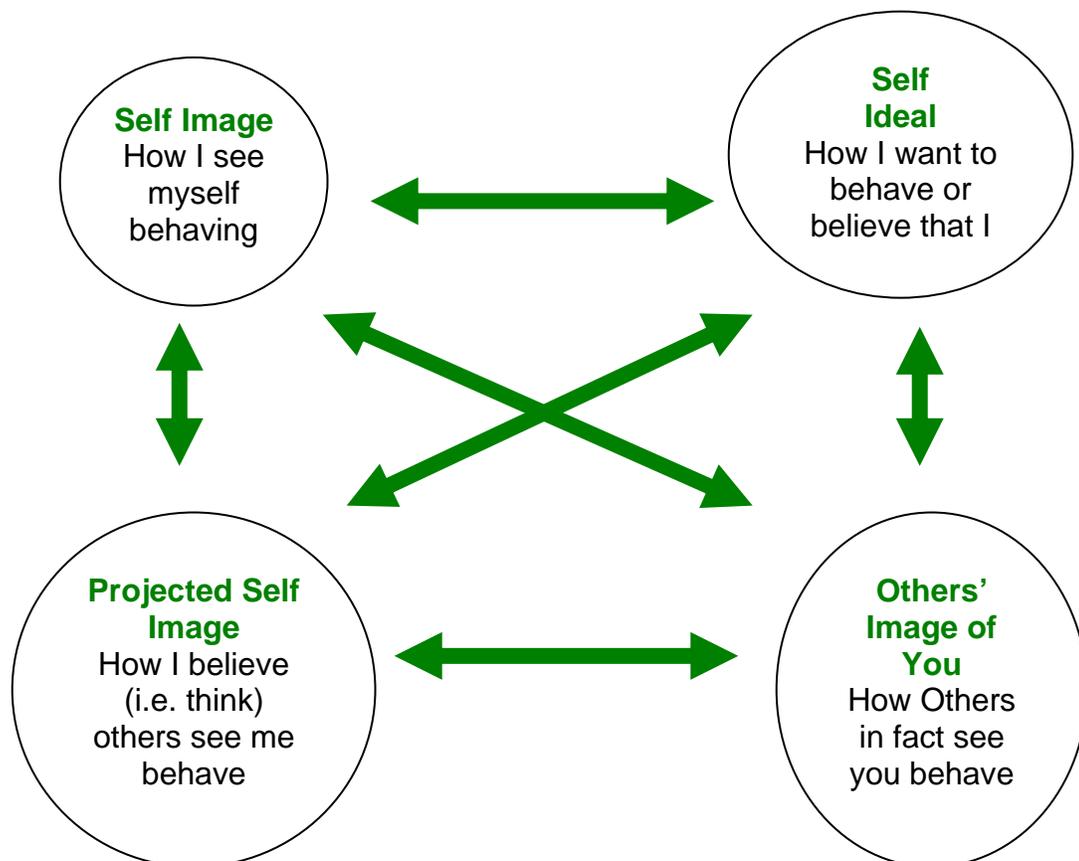
Things to Act on
When Working with a Personal Coach

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1. Organizations use coaches as a way of developing individuals. If you have an opportunity to work with a coach, you may want to think about the following points as you start to build your relationship. Carefully considering them will dramatically increase the effectiveness of your time spent with your coach.
2. Both at work and in life, **effective** individuals generally have a **high correlation** (degree of agreement) among the four views of themselves shown below. When this is the case, such individuals do not need to alter their perceptions of others or of events in order to defend the differences or explain the discrepancies among these four views of self. That means they are **accurate observers of themselves, others, and events**. As a result, their **behaviour is based on fact**, not on own internal personal needs.



3. 360° feedback, whether delivered through a structured instrument or collected through systematic dialogue with others in the work place, may reveal a difference between your **Self Image** and the way that others see you behave (**Other's Image of You**). Coaching and personal development that uses 360° feedback explores these differences and their significance for your personal effectiveness.

4. Often, we believe that others see us behaving the way that we think we behave. We project our self-image (**Projected Self Image**) and think that others see us in this way. As a result, there is a discrepancy between the way that we think others see us and the way that they, in fact, see us. Coaches use 360° feedback to identify this difference.

We tend to base our future behaviours with others on the way that we *believe* others see us behave (**Projected Self Image**). They will base their future behaviours with us on the way that they *actually* see us behave (**Other’s Image of You**). Unless these two agree, each of us starts from a different place.

When this happens, it sets up a self re-enforcing cycle that increases the distance between the way that we believe that others see us behave and the way that they actually see us behave. As a result, our effectiveness in working with others decreases.

5. There are other reasons why there may be differences between an individual’s **Self Image** and the way that others see that person behave (**Other’s Image of You**).
 - Our self-image could reflect the way that we **intend to behave (Self Ideal)**, rather than the way that we in fact behave.
 - Our self-image could reflect the way that we **would like to behave or believe we should behave (Self Ideal)** rather than the way that we in fact behave.
6. Effective dialogue with a coach focuses on very specific behaviors. Sorting the reasons for any differences between your self-image and others’ view of your behaviour at this level allows you to do something about it. You can act and change your competencies, because competencies are simply learned behaviors. You can add new behaviours to your behavior repertoire that improve your effectiveness.
7. At the same time, this focused coaching dialogue will increase the accuracy of your self-awareness. This is key to increasing your effectiveness. The closer your **Self Image** is to your **Projected Self Image** and to **Others’ View of You**, the more your behaviour choices will be based on the reality of the situations in which you find yourself.
8. We all have differences between our **Self Image** and our **Self Ideal**. If we did not, we would have no reason to change. A **Self Ideal** acts as a motivating force. In some cases, we set parts of our **Self Ideal** at levels that we can never reach. Understanding and being aware of this is more

important than aligning all of the parts of our **Self Image** with our **Self Ideal**.

9. Feedback is an essential process for increasing your self-awareness of these dynamics and for increasing your behavioral effectiveness. Your coach will be giving you feedback throughout the coaching relationship. Remember that feedback is only the first step in becoming more effective.

**Feedback brings awareness,
Awareness brings choice,
Choice brings freedom,
Freedom brings effectiveness.**

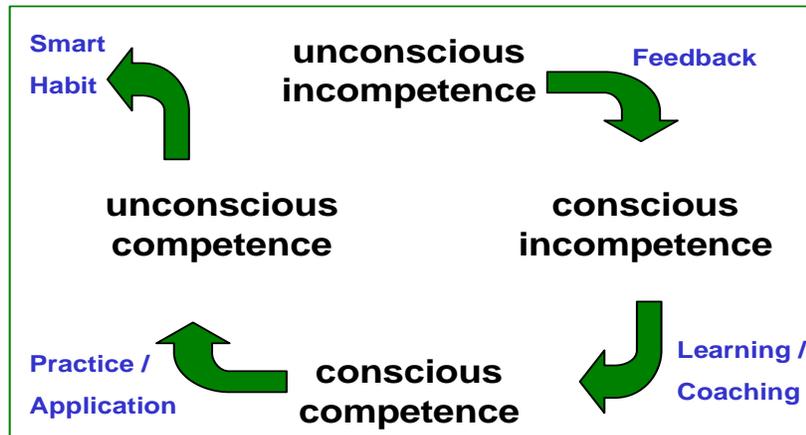
The more choices you have about how to behave, the more effective you can be. To have choices, you need to:

- be aware of what is happening as you interact with others,
- be aware of how others see your behaviour,
- be capable of doing what it takes to be effective in the situation at hand and of adapting your behavior to the needs of the situation.

If you have the freedom to choose how you behave, you have more freedom than the person who does not. The freer you are to adapt your behavior, the more effective you will be.

10. Your personal effectiveness increases by moving from:

- **unconscious incompetence,**
- **to conscious incompetence,**
- **to conscious competence,**
- **to unconscious competence.**



You move through the following cycle.

- You don't know that you are ineffective.
- Through feedback and your dialogue with your coach, you do know that you are ineffective and you accept it.
- Your coach helps you learn new behaviors. As you use them on the job, you become more effective but the new behaviors take conscious thought and practice.
- Through practice at work, and through dialogue with your coach about these changes, your new behavior becomes a smart habit that you can do without a great deal of conscious thought. You are more effective, reacting spontaneously to the needs of the situation as you are in it.

The new behaviors have been added to your behavior repertoire. You can do them as you need them. Your old behavior has not gone away. You can also do it, when and if it is appropriate. As these choices become smart habits, you behave them without conscious thought. You simply behave effectively in a wider set of circumstances.

11. Feedback, whether from your coach, from other individuals, or from 360° instruments will not have any useful impact on you unless:

- it makes **sense to you**,
- you are ready to **accept it**,

- you are ready to **act on it**.

Therefore, it is very important that you take steps to make sure that you know what your coach intends to accomplish through the use of a 360° feedback instrument or systematic feedback collection from your peers, subordinates, and superiors. Insist that the feedback is translated into business terms and every day business language.. Don't stay at the level of the psychological terms that may be used in an instrument chosen by your coach. Ask your coach to translate it into day-to-day working language.

You are the person who is in control of changing your behavior. As you work with feedback, remember that coaches are using feedback as a catalyst to improve your behavioral functioning in your current work environment.

Don't be satisfied with feedback that tells you that you are an ‘ineffective leader,’ for instance. Ask your coach to bring it down to specific behaviors in specific circumstances. Ask your coach for insight into the concrete things that you can do to make a difference in these situations. Then work with your coach to practice these new behaviors, so that you are prepared when you actually need to do them in the course of your day-to-day work.

12. All feedback is a function of the **culture of the organization in which it is given**. Behavior that works well in one culture may not work well in another organization's culture. This means that you must remember the following.

- Effectiveness increases as you adapt your personal behaviour to the requirements of your current organization's culture.
- Coaches must “know” and “accept” your organization's culture in order to be useful to you in a coaching relationship. A coach who works from a general model spanning many organizations will be less immediately helpful to you than one who can anchor that model in your organization's day-to-day working culture.

When dialoguing with your coach, you can always choose to “declare” that your organization's culture is mis-directed, mis-guided, or inappropriate. When you make that choice, you also choose certain consequences. Either you must succeed at moving your organization's culture to a place that you do not consider mis-guided, or you must work through the implications of distancing yourself from behavior that your organization considers normal and effective.

If this distance is great enough, you may have to consider finding an organization with a culture that you find more appropriate for you.

13. Coaching is not about who **you are in any deep psychological sense. Coaching is not psychotherapy or psychological counseling.**

Psychotherapy or psychological counseling is redemptive education that addresses life trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Coaching does not deal with your deep underlying unchangeable psychodynamics. Coaching does not explore the deep internal determinants of your personality.

Coaching focuses on the many ways in which you can express your personality in your current work. It helps you find those behaviours that allow you to express who you are in the most effective way in your current work culture.

14. **Coaching is about how you behave at work to achieve work related ends and results.** It is about how you do your job. It is about how you choose **to act as a functioning individual** at work.

Your dialogue with a coach will be about the choices that you can make as you interact with others at work. Coaching explores the additional behavior choices you can make as you increase your understanding of your work-based relationships. As you work with your coach at this level, you will have many chances to increase your work effectiveness.

If you want to explore your deeper underlying personality determinants, or deal with life trauma or post-traumatic stress, ask your coach to direct you to a psychotherapist or counseling psychologist. You will know when you are want to explore or to deal with such issues when you initiate dialogue with your coach that deals with life issues other than those that you encounter on a day-to-day basis in the work place.

About WCI and WCI Press

WCI Press is the publishing imprint of WCI (**W**orkplace **C**ompetence **I**nternational Limited – www.wcilltd.com). For many years, we worked as organizational improvement consultants. With the change of the century, and the expansion of the Internet, we started to publish some of our professional development material on the Internet. We also started **WCI Press**. Its mission is to publish personal and professional development material on paper and on the web. One of our first Web publications was the material used in our late 1990's workshop on

competency based HR management. (See <http://www.wcilttd.com/wci%20press/WCIPresstoppage.htm>.)

As our own experience with this form of "soft" publishing grew, we realized that nature of our business had changed forever. More and more experience and expertise would be available, free, on the Internet to dedicated professionals. We are proud to be part of this change. But we also realized that we needed to change our own business model in response.

We are still consultants. We have the ability to help clients based on our experience. However, today, we are doers. We get things done, rather than simply provide expertise. We still believe in skill transfer and sunset clauses. Nevertheless, we primarily focus on helping companies achieve their bottom line goals through our consulting assignments.

We have also become publishers with a mission. We are dedicated to helping working professionals become more and more capable in their chosen endeavors. Our publications are, and will be, focused on increasing the skills of working professionals.

We start from the premise that a motivated adult is capable of self-growth. Our publications are designed to be resources for motivated adult working professionals. However, we know that HR professionals, HR trainers, college and university adult educators, mediators, group facilitators, counselors, personal performance coaches and business coaches add a great deal to the growth experience of working professionals.

About Roelf Woldring

Roelf is a former IT senior executive and senior organizational change consultant. In 2003, Roelf founded WCI Press. His graduate work was in psychology of the workplace. Roelf writes on software development, on organizational change, and on personal and professional development.

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