

## How to Create Awareness through Changing Perspectives

Rhonda Gould



**I was coaching a client the other day.** She was weighed down by all the past experiences and having a hard time finding a way to lighten the load and get unstuck. How does a coach help such a client gain new awareness and make forward progress?

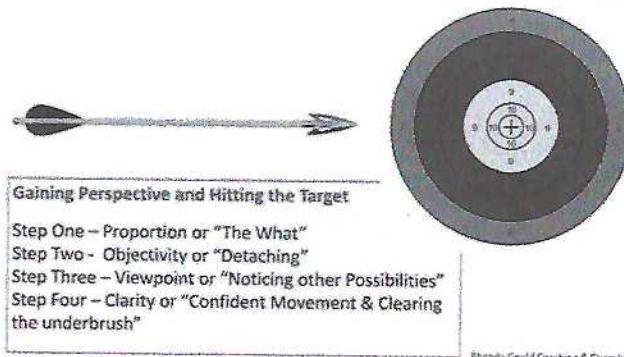
One possible way to get unstuck and create forward progress is to change one's perspective. Coach Tony Stoltzfus says, *"A key reason a person seeks to work with a coach is to get perspective on their life. There are 4 key principles for gaining perspective: Proportion, Objectivity, Viewpoint and Clarity."*

As shown in the diagram, I find it helpful to think through these four principles by using a process called "Hitting the Target."

When a client is new to the process of moving forward, their arrow will most likely land on the blue section of the target as they explore the **"what"** they are wanting to hit.

When a client discovers the **"what,"** they can begin looking at it objectively and **"detaching"** from it. This might mean identifying and letting go of preconceived notions that may be keeping them stuck.

As the client moves through the detaching process, they will often realize that there are **other viewpoints** to the same situation and start to notice other possibilities. A coach can help the client achieve this by asking questions such as, "In ten years from now, how might you look at this situation?" Or "Think of someone you admire. How do you believe they would move in this situation?" Gaining a new and broader viewpoint will be the catalyst for new awareness and forward movement.



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As the client strengthens their muscles and their aim grows steadier, they gain greater **clarity**, hitting the center of the target and creating “confident movement” which sometimes requires “clearing out the underbrush.”

With processes such as “Hitting the Target,” a client achieves forward progress by facilitating a shift in mindset as a result of a new awareness. This shift helps a client achieve what PCC coach Dean Harbry calls, “inculcating a high-level vantage point,” to think and see from a different perspective. This helps a client arrive at “aha” and “lightbulb moments” of new awareness which drives forward momentum.

When a coach not only actively listens to the client but also to their surroundings, the client often experiences a “light bulb” moment that changes their perspective.

For example, when working with a client, I noticed she was having a hard time accepting that she was loveable, that she had value, and that she could love deeply.

During our call, I noticed dogs barking in the background. I asked her if those were her dogs and she said “Yes.” I then asked, “What would your dog say if I asked how they felt about you?”



Immediately, the smile came on her face, the “light bulb” was starting to flicker.

She said, “They would say they love me more than anyone. That they are so thankful for me. That they can trust that I’m going to give them food and a warm place to sleep. They know how much I love them, and they will always love me.”

And then she cried. She realized that she is lovable, valued, and can show love. She then transferred that new awareness to the humans in her life. That was her “light bulb moment.”

When a client has a narrow view of their situation, as my client did, they are limited to a small snapshot of their life. I often use a tool that I call “Picture This” to help clients gain a different perspective. This tool asks these questions, to help clients change their perspective from a “snapshot” to a “mural.”

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A circular seal for the Certified Christian Leadership Coach (CCLC) program. The seal is blue with a gold border. The text 'CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP COACH' is at the top and bottom, and 'COACH APPROACH MINISTRIES' is at the bottom. There are two stars at the bottom of the seal.

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1. Look into the future and imagine what a snapshot may look like. What is in that picture? What is most important about that picture?

2. Look into the picture. See the situation and recognize it for what it is. What is your part in that picture? How might someone you admire view the picture?

Look at a picture of you facing this challenge with an attitude of a conqueror. How does it feel to see yourself as a conqueror? How did that conqueror face those obstacles?

This forward-thinking process will aid in the movement of your clients.

Caroline Contillo at the Idealist has inspired me to utilize these four practices as I help clients change their perspective.

**Don't be on autopilot.** Take a few minutes to connect. Allow silence. Give your client space. Ask forward motion questions. Ask yourself, "what qualities are you cultivating by not being on autopilot?"

**Follow your awe.** As a coach, what do you find awe-inspiring in your client? What questions are you asking that will help them find their "awe" and follow it? How are you relaying back what you notice about them? If fear is a factor that is holding them back from making their "awe" a reality, what question can you ask to bring that into focus?

**Notice the "all or nothing" thinking.** When a client is stuck in the "all or nothing" thinking, be curious. Why does it have to be all or nothing? What past experiences have created this mindset? What does "all" mean to them? Helping the client recognize this limited mindset by asking questions that create a sense of excitement. Ask visionary questions such as, "Where do you want to be in 1 year, 5 years, or 10 years? What if there were no limits to what you could do?" Open them up to the possibilities.

**Don't zone out, zoom out.** Details are important but they are not everything. Allowing the client time to create a view of the big picture with the details in mind, will help them dream. This zooming out process will keep them from zoning out altogether. As a coach, we are there to help them see the possibilities that excite them, keeping them in motion. Ask the client, "How might focusing solely on one detail keeping you from moving to that big dream?"

As a coach, I believe that my clients can reach their desires and dreams by breaking through their past perspectives, regardless of their starting point. But what I, as the coach, am responsible for is doing the same for myself. By seeking out new and more broad thinking perspectives, I will gain a wider vantage point and become a more open coach to help my clients.

How are you broadening your perspective?



**Rhonda Gould**, is an ICF coach working on her ACC. She received her training through PCCI. She specializes in helping women reveal patterns that are holding them back. She believes that every client has the ability within themselves to break the patterns and promote forward movement into career opportunities, new relationships, fun adventures and so much more. Rhonda consults with clients centered around having healthy boundaries and dealing with difficult people and hard conversations. You can learn more about Rhonda's work at <https://rhondagouldonline.com/>.