








101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments.

Eclectic Chapter: Technique 23 (pages 68-70)

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Misfits

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Where can this be used?					Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required	
 Individual Supervision	 Group Supervision	 Peer Supervision	 Individual Reflection	 All levels		

When is this used?

Useful when a coach wants to explore how they show up to clients, or in life generally. Perhaps because many supervisees assume they should have a coaching identity grounded in theory, they become stuck. This exercise takes a playful and creative approach to help generate additional insight.

What is the technique?

This technique uses the children's game of 'Misfits' - it contains twelve characters printed on card each divided into five pieces – a hat, a face, a body with arms and two legs. The aim is to create a character which works as a metaphor for how you are being when coaching.

Step 1: Ensure each supervisee has access to a box of 'Misfit' characters to work with, give some time to explore the pieces.

Step 2: Invite the supervisee to create a character that says something about how they work. Encourage them not to overthink it, simply choose 5 pieces which hold some appeal. For example a popular piece is a mermaid's fishtail; some say it symbolises an ability to be fluid and change direction quickly.

Step 3: Ask the supervisee to tell the story of their creation. There is no particular order to do this in, in fact the order they choose is interesting in itself.

Step 4: Depending on the focus of the supervision enquiry, you may then follow up with some additional questions.



For example, if they had recently had a tough client session, it might be interesting to ask which parts of their Misfit were working well and which parts weren't on that occasion. Or perhaps explore how the session would have been if a different misfit piece was present and active.

When you are doing this with a group, then it can be useful to invite comment from the other members. Ask open questions like "What resonated for you?" or "What did you notice as XX told their story?". The intention is to generate more food for thought rather than get into a discussion about how they interpreted a particular piece.

Step 5: Take a picture of the misfit created as an 'aide memoire' for the session.

Figure 1.6: An example of a supervisee's 'misfit'.



How to work with the technique...

This apparently simple exercise is deceptively powerful so ensure you give it the space it deserves. Sharing the 'Misfit' without a narrative could confuse rather than inform, people often interpret the pieces differently. For example, the mermaid tail may be seen as 'slippery' rather than 'fluid'.

Observe how the supervisee(s) approach the task, there are often parallels with their signature style.

What else might need attention?

This exercise works as a catalyst, generating a positive energy for individual(s) to articulate their sense of their coaching presence. A more conventional dialogue might then be required to develop their insights into a more formal expression of how they work.



A word of caution.

You may notice what of their narrative seems congruent with how you experience them in supervision. Where something doesn't feel quite congruent – that in itself might be something to explore (although this may be less possible in a group). It is important to work tentatively because the incongruence may well lie outside of their awareness. Alternatively, the exercise is often experienced as 'just a bit of fun' and the dissonance may simply be a quirk holding no particular significance.

What other uses are there for this technique?

A useful ice-breaker when bringing a group to work together for the first time. It's relatively non-threatening as there can be no 'right or wrong' answer – it is also highly memorable. You could revisit the technique with an ongoing group; "What is constant?" and "What is evolving?" are interesting questions to explore.

There are many different slants with which to position this exercise:

- How do you see yourself as a coach – when you do your best work?
- How might your clients experience you as a coach?
- What kind of coach would you like to become?
- Which parts of you are core and which parts are more peripheral?
- What happens to your coaching presence when you are not working at your best?

This exercise could also be translated for work with coaching clients who want to explore their leadership style.

Resources:

The game Misfits can be purchased from Rocket Games. Available at:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Rocket-Games-ROC032-](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Rocket-Games-ROC032-Misfits/dp/B0006D393Q/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_product_top?ie=UTF8)

[Misfits/dp/B0006D393Q/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_product_top?ie=UTF8](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Rocket-Games-ROC032-Misfits/dp/B0006D393Q/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_product_top?ie=UTF8) [Accessed on 21 October 2019]