





101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments.

Transpersonal Chapter: Technique 94 (pages 327-330)

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Ideal Model

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Where can this be used?				Typical Level of Supervisee Experience Required
 Individual Supervision				 Experienced Supervisees Only

When is this used?

This is useful for envisioning the ideal state of any chosen subject, e.g. Being the best coach I can be or developing my ideal coaching practice. A strong vision acts like a magnet. It provides the 'north star' that guides the supervisee towards realising their vision. Typically, you would be prompted by the supervisee wishing a situation were different or better, or by the supervisee over-focussing on the negative aspects of a situation, or seeing only problems to be solved. It could also be prompted by the supervisee's desire for self-development or a goal they wish to attain.

What is the technique?

Working with ideal qualities and states taps into the higher unconscious: it draws on the best of our self. It is most powerfully facilitated through co-opting our imagination (through drawing, visualising, bodywork, guided visualisation). It is well known that envisioning something helps us work towards it. Lakoff (2004) called this 'motor force' – images act like a magnet, propelling us to achieve what we imagine.

Step 1: Contract to use this technique and agree the time frame for the full realisation of this ideal state, as chosen by the supervisee and topic-appropriate – e.g. six months, one year, five years.

Step 2: Invite the supervisee to sit comfortably; do a brief relaxation breathing technique to induce a calm, receptive state.

Step 3: Guide the supervisee to fully imagine the ideal state/model of their topic, e.g. a relationship, their identity as a coach, the achievement of a goal. Here is an example:



- a) 'Imagine yourself one year from now. The difficult relationship between you and X is now resolved. In fact, it has flowered into its fully ideal state. See yourself and the other person....'
- b) Encourage all the senses: 'Where are you? What can you see? What are you hearing? What are you feeling? What are you saying to each other? What is happening? Is anyone else there?' etc.
- c) Have the supervisee imagine silently or talk out loud – whichever suits their style.
- d) You might then suggest to the supervisee that they 'helicopter out' and look at the ideal relationship, achieved goal/career from a point of perspective. Ask 'Looking at this ideal state from a distance, what did you have to develop in yourself to get here?' 'What needed to change/ happen/ be resolved for you to move towards this state?'; and/or further questions related to the steps the supervisee might take to move towards their ideal model.
- e) Bring them back to the room in an appropriate and well-paced way.

Step 6: Debrief the learning and insights together. You can invite the supervisee to capture key points in their notebook, or through drawing.

How to work with the technique...

Transpersonal philosophy holds that just as the acorn has the coding within it to become an oak tree, so each human is born with an emergent life purpose. Working with the ideal model is about realising our highest potential and living congruently with our ideals. Creating an environment where the supervisee is comfortable expressing their most private hopes and dreams is the foundation for using this technique.

Guided visualisation is one way of working. You might also use drawing, movement, or working with clay. It all depends on your personal skills and whether you want to reinforce the supervisee's existing strengths by working congruently or help them develop a new skill by choosing an unfamiliar mode.

What else might need attention?

This way of working can go deep so is best reserved for experienced supervisors. Deep rooted issues may surface so be prepared for this possibility. Make sure you have experienced this technique many times yourself as your confidence will ensure the feeling of safety the supervisee needs to 'travel' in their imagination and envision courageously.

A word of caution.

Working with guided visualisation is contraindicated for supervisees who have difficulty grounding, (their energy feels speedy, airy, erratic or hyper) or who jump from topic to topic without focus or depth. In these instances the work is about helping them ground in the present and focus on pragmatic action.

What other uses are there for this technique?



With practice this could also be used with coaching clients.

Reference:

Lakoff, G. (2004) *Don't think of an elephant: Know your values and frame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing Co.

Further reading:

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