Personality Plus - Using Personalities as an Ecosystem for Coaching

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Personalities in Coaching

Using personalities as an ecosystem for Coaching

The Role of a Coach

A Coach assists clients in setting goals in line with their values and charting a course to get there. The spotlight is always on the client, with no room for the coach's preferences, biases, or values.

The Coach must be mindful of the following during the coaching journey:

- Create awareness in the client of the prism through which they view the world.
- Release all judgement about what should and should not be and leave it to the client to decide.
- Help the client to discover their underlying beliefs and how they influence perception.

Emotional intelligence is therefore a key strength that every coach must hone. The personality plus model presents a simple and powerful way to understand the client's motivations and values in the context of their goals. The model also helps the coach understand his/her own emotional/ personality make up and provides context, especially in areas where judgement may creep in without the coach being aware of it.

The following pages delve into the basics of this model, how it can serve to develop rapport and trust in a coaching relationship. We will also examine how Personality Plus can help with coaching presence, through better self-awareness and a structure to understand and work with emotions.

Does Personality Matter

Why must a Coach consider personalities during the Coaching Journey.

Florence Littaur, the author of Personality Plus points out that often twins brought up in the exact same environment can have very different temperaments. Children in playschool may exhibit different personalities. Some may be reserved and quiet, afraid to get messy and avoid activities like finger painting in favour of more organized activities like building blocks etc. Some enjoy being the centre of attention and like to lead, others prefer to go along and rarely initiate ideas of their own.

Historical Background

Human interest in personalities goes back to some of the oldest civilizations.

Historical background and alternative models

The study of personalities dates back to ancient Greece (around 400 B.C.). Hippocrates was the first to propose that people are different because of differences in their body chemistry. He and other Greek thinkers believed that people could be categorized into four basic groupings and that their differing physical makeup (or "fluids" i.e. black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood, in their bodies:) was what caused their personalities to differ. Around A.D. 190, Galen, a Greek physician, build on Hippocrates's ideas and came up with what he called four temperaments- four personalities or moods that he said were caused by the imbalance between the fluids as proposed by Hippocrates. He called these four temperaments: Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholy and Phlegmatic. The four-personality model has served as the basis for various modern offshoots, DISC being one of the better-known structures. Other similar models are Merrill-Reid social structure, Larry Crabb, Alessandra & Cathcart, all of while rely on the four-personality model, based on Hippocrates's idea. MBTI is one of the most popular models that classifies personalities into sixteen categories, based on combinations of four traits. MBTI is widely accepted, though it is more complex to understand and apply.

Personality Plus Model

Personality Plus Grouping

Is it possible to divide seven billion humans into four categories? This is not what personality groupings advocate or imply. We are all unique and no two individuals are exactly alike. However, a degree of generalization is evident and helps Coaches understand and appreciate their client's perspective. This also helps the coach guide the discussion in line with how personalities process information or make decisions. The client will be more amenable to the coach's assistance if he/she sees evidence that the coach respects his/her 'truths' or perspective.

The four basic personality types are:

1. Popular Sanguine
2. Powerful Choleric
3. Perfect Melancholy
4. Peaceful Phlegmatic

Personality Matrix

Popular Sanguine	LEAD Extroverted • Optimistic • Outspoken	Powerful Choleric

Basic Desire:
    have fun
Emotional Needs:
    attention
    affection
    approval
    acceptance
Controls By:
    charm
		Basic Desire:
		    have control
		Emotional Needs:
		    loyalty
		    sense of control
		    appreciation
		    credit for work
		Controls By:
		    threat of anger

PLAY Witty • Easygoing • Not goal-oriented		WORK Decisive • Organized • Goal-oriented
Peaceful Phlegmatic	ANALYZE Introverted • Pessimistic • Soft-spoken	Perfect Melancholy

Basic Desire:
    have peace
Emotional Needs:
    peace and quiet
    feeling of worth
    lack of stress
    respect
Controls By:
    procrastination
		Basic Desire:
		    have perfection
		Emotional Needs:
		    sensitivity
		    support
		    space
		    silence
		Controls By:
		    threat of moods

The chart provides an at a glance view of the personalities and their basic characteristics.

A brief description of each type is provided in the following pages.

Most individuals display one of these types, which represents their **basic personality**. And fewer traits from another one of the types. This represents their **secondary personality**.

You can identify personalities by administering a test.

As you grow more familiar with the system, you could identify personality as you interact with the client.

Popular Sanguine

Traits

These are the fun loving, high energy, outgoing kind of people.

Desire: to have fun

Key strengths: ability to talk about anything, at any time, any place, bubbling personality, optimism, sense of humour, storytelling ability

Key weaknesses: disorganized, can't remember details or names, exaggerate, not serious about anything, too gullible and naïve

Emotional needs: Attention, Affection, Approval, Acceptance

Are afraid of: Being unpopular or bored, having to live by the clock, having to keep record of money spent

Like people who: Listen and laugh, praise, and approve

Dislike people who: criticize, don't respond to their humour

Are valuable at work for: their colourful creativity, optimism, light touch, cheering up others, entertaining

Could improve if: they got organized, didn't talk so much

As leaders: excite, persuade, and inspire others; exude charm and entertain; are forgetful on follow through

React to stress by: leaving the scene, creating excuses, blaming others

Recognized by: Their constant talking, loud volume, bright eyes

Living in weakness: Loud, shallow, impulsive, monopolize conversation, undependable, over dramatic, self-centred, superficial, easily distracted

Living in strengths: Energetic, warm, enthusiastic, approachable, inviting, cheerleader

Tips for Coaching

- Meet their emotional needs of attention by active listening and voicing approval of their strengths
- Make the engagement fun and get their inputs on a creative way forward
- Mirror their enthusiasm and sense of joy
- Facilitate goal setting so that weaknesses are addressed, and strengths are amplified
- Help them be self-aware and connect with others through empathy for other types

Sample Questions for Goal setting

- What excites and inspires you
- If you were to fully live your life, what is the first change you would start to make
- What are you most excited about for the coming year?
- Can you imagine your desired outcome? Describe it to me.

Powerful Choleric

Traits

These are the ones who like to lead and control

Desire: to have control

Key strengths: ability to take charge of anything instantly and to make quick, correct judgements

Key weaknesses: too bossy, domineering, autocratic, insensitive, impatient, unwilling to delegate or give credit to others

Emotional needs: sense of obedience, appreciation for accomplishments, credit for ability

Are afraid of: losing control of anything

Like people who: are supportive and submissive, see things their way, cooperate quickly, let them take credit

Dislike people who: are lazy and not interested in working constantly, buck their authority, become independent, aren't loyal

Are valuable at work because: they can accomplish more than anyone else in shorter time, are usually right

Could improve if: They allow others to make decisions, delegate authority, become more patient, didn't expect everyone to produce as they do

As leaders: they have a natural feel for being in-charge, a quick sense of what will work, a sincere belief in their ability to achieve, a potential to overwhelm less aggressive people

React to stress by: tightening control, working harder, exercising more, getting rid of the offender

Recognized by: their fast-moving approach, quick grab for control, self-confidence, restless and overpowering attitude

Living in weaknesses: In your face, know it all, angry, bossy, belligerent, argumentative, usurp authority, offensive, controlling, narrow-minded manipulative

Living in strengths: productive, visionary, multitasker, open-minded, leader, organizes people and resources, purposeful/focused, motivates others, constructive

Tips for Coaching

- Keep sessions focused, have an agenda, and stay on point unless the client chooses a different direction
- Show appreciation for their abilities and achievements
- Help them build self-awareness of how they respond to stimulus. Help them build empathy for others, to be able to harness their team's talent
- Give them a sense of control over proceedings and results. They thrive in the overt knowledge that results depend on their choices
- Show them the big picture of how addressing destructive behaviour will lead to sustainable victories and eventually help they thrive

Sample Questions for Goal setting

- What specific goals would you like to meet by working with a Coach
- How will you evaluate the success of the coaching in the end?
- What are you tolerating/putting up with?
- What are your current issues?
- What are the three things that would make the biggest difference in your life

Perfect Melancholy

Traits

These are the well dressed, organized, meticulous and analytical kind

Key strengths: ability to organize and set long range goals, to set high standards and ideals, and to analyse deeply

Key weaknesses: easily depressed, spends too much time on preparation, is too focused on details, remembers negatives, suspicious of others

Emotional needs: sense of stability, space, silence, sensitivity, support

Are afraid of: no one understands how they really feel, making a mistake, having to compromise standards

Like people who: are serious, intellectual, deep and can carry on a sensible conversation

Dislike people who: are lightweights, forgetful, late, disorganized, superficial, prevaricating, and unpredictable

Are valuable at work for: their sense of detail, love of analysis, follow through, high standards of performance, compassion for the hurting

Could improve if: they didn't take life quite so seriously, didn't insist that others be perfectionists

As leaders: they organize well, are sensitive to people's feelings, have deep creativity, want quality performance

React to stress by: withdrawing, getting lost in a book, becoming depressed, giving up, recounting problems

Recognized by: their serious and sensitive nature, well-mannered approach, self-deprecating comments, meticulous and well-groomed looks

Living in weaknesses: hesitant, fearful, uptight, fragile, hermit, moody, hypochondriac, emotionally vulnerable, self-righteous/aloof, critical, obsessive

Living in strengths: Empathetic, succinct, analytical, organized, compassionate, good listener, reliable, trust-worthy

Tips for Coaching

- A perfect melancholy client would likely want to know the coaching process and journey. She would likely want to know the success of various methods and tools, case studies of other similar clients. Any information that would give her a better handle on her coaching journey.
- Help her set far reaching, long term goals. Discuss how certain goals may prove to be key to other areas of importance to her
- Give her enough time and space to do her own analysis
- Show her how coaching can help her reach higher levels of awareness and performance
- Help them communicate better with others by building on their strengths

Sample Questions for Goal setting

- List the things you love/ hate about your work (for executive coaching)
- If you could do anything at all, what would your ideal career/life look like
- If you were 90 years old and looking back at your life, what would you have done to make you feel proud
- What would have happened in 6 months that your life/career/business is doing better than you could have expected

Peaceful Phlegmatic

Desire: To avoid conflict, to keep peace

Key strengths: balance, even disposition, dry sense of humour, pleasing personality

Key weaknesses: lack of decisiveness, enthusiasm or energy, a hidden will of iron

Emotional needs: sense of respect, feeling of worth, understanding, emotional support

Are afraid of: having to deal with major personal problems, being left holding the bag, making major changes

Like people who: make decisions for them, recognize their strengths, do not ignore them, and give them respect

Dislike people who: are too pushy, too loud, or expect too much of them

Are valuable at work because: they mediate between contentious people and objectively solve problems

Could improve if: they set goals and become self-motivated, were willing to do more and move faster than expected, faced their own problems as well as handle those of others

As leaders: they keep calm, cool and collected, don't make impulsive decisions, are well liked and inoffensive, don't cause trouble, don't often come up with brilliant new ideas

React to stress by: hiding from it, watching TV, eating, tuning out life

Recognized by: their calm approach, relaxed posture (sitting or leaning when possible)

Living in weaknesses: Dull, Boring, Indecisive, spineless, lazy, sarcastic, obstinate, passive-aggressive, no initiative

Living in strengths: Loyal, faithful, witty, dependable, steady, consistent, willing, patient, calm

Tips for Coaching

- Spend enough time getting to know them and building rapport. These individuals are very relationship oriented.
- Appreciate the value of what they contribute in various spheres
- Recognize their strengths and help them build on these in line with their goals
- Help them set powerful goals that can leverage their strengths and manage weaknesses

Sample Questions for Goal setting

- What would you like as a goal if you knew you could not fail?
- What areas of your life could be upgraded or tweaked?
- What are three things you're doing regularly that don't serve or support you?
- What is your biggest challenge in the upcoming year?

Personalities and Coaching Presence

Creating Awareness

Help build the client's Emotional Intelligence

A key responsibility of the Coach is to help her client build awareness of her emotions, strengths, weaknesses etc. So that positive behaviour is developed and encouraged, and destructive habits and patterns are turned around.

This can begin with helping the client deconstruct her own personality. Why do certain people or patterns upset her, what kind of role does she prefers at work or home. These become clear when the client gets to know her own primary and secondary personality. A basic understanding of other personality types will help her see the motivation and value of those she interacts with and help build emotional intelligence.

Releasing Judgement

The Coach must refrain from judging the client

A fundamental tenet of Coaching at ICF is that the client is creative, resourceful, and whole. This means that the Coach has no reason to judge or advise his client. This calls for releasing judgement and pursing a relationship of equals.

Personality Plus can help the Coach get a better perspective to the Coach so that judgement may not cloud his vision. Sometimes we may judge other's choices or behaviour simply because they differ from our own. The personalities help explain the differences in outlook and preferences, and this can prove to be the compass that keeps the coaching process free from biases.

Underlying Beliefs

Help the client discover and work through limiting underlying beliefs

All of us form certain underlying beliefs through our unique life experiences. These my sometimes stifle growth if they happen to be limiting or negative.

Underlying beliefs may have a lot to do with how we see the world. This pair of coloured glasses becomes apparent through a study of the personalities. The model can be used to make sense of underlying beliefs and help the client come to terms with beliefs that she may have held for long. These can be self-limiting in nature e.g. I'm not Athletic or I'm not great with numbers and be a hindrance to growth unless they are recognized and addressed. Personalities can be one of the tools a Coach can use to uncover and address such beliefs.

References

The following books have been referenced

Wired that way : Marita Littauer and Florence Littauer

Personality Plus: Florence Littauer

Personality Plus at work: Florence Littauer and Rose Sweet