

CONNECT WITH YOURSELF FIRST BEFORE OTHERS

CORPORATE COACH



By Dr Michael Heah
ICF Master Certified Coach
<http://mikeheah.blogspot.com>
All questions and coaching enquiries may be
emailed to: mikeheah@corporate-coach.com
or call 03-6205 4488.

Here lies a common problem with many coaches, which is their failure to connect well with their coachees before and during the coaching. No matter what we have in our coaching bags of qualifications, coaching hours, corporate experience, professional personality and so forth, they all add to nothing to make up for the inability to connect with our prospects or coachees at a deep level for trust to prevail.

In this lesson (and the next), we will spend a while on the subject of Connecting so that you can pick up some critical connecting skills that every coach needs to have in order to succeed.

'Connecting' is the first of the 10 Coaching Milestones, which is regarded by many as the most important milestone of them all. In the context of Coaching, 'to connect' is defined as 'the ability to create a safe environment where the coachee feels recognised, accepted and

respected'. When a coachee has this positive feeling, she becomes comfortable with the coach and is prepared to talk freely without the fear of being judged or criticised on what she is saying. In such an environment, the coach earns the highest level of trust that results in him gaining 'emotional credit points' that proportionately increases his influence on the coachee.

There are two aspects in the connecting skills; the first is Personal Mastery and the second is People Mastery. In this lesson we shall focus on Personal Mastery, which is about the self-awareness to recognise our emotions and moods before or when they surface (due to a challenging situation) and self-management, which is about managing or disarming them to gain calmness and patience to help stay composed and collected in face of challenges. In such a state, we are rational, confident and objective in doing the right things for the right consequences.

Self-awareness is gained when we consciously invest time and effort to connect with ourselves. When we give the

space to 'talk' to ourselves through self-reflection, meditation or other forms of quiet moments we get to know ourselves a lot more as to how we operate. We know what triggers us, so we become proactive and well-prepared for them before they happen.

But when we are on the 'busy highway', we have little time to know ourselves well, as we are busy handling the many events and people outside us. Personal time has to be crafted out of busy schedules for us to spend time with no one else, but ourselves.

Knowing or having self-awareness of ourselves is not enough, we need self-management to manage ourselves, too; like ways to manage our moods and emotions. So what happens when we recognise our moods and emotions? We then need another set of internal mechanism to manage them. There are a number of ways we can do. One is self-talk to affirm our beliefs in ourselves. Two is saying to ourselves for instance, "I will succeed" or "It doesn't bother me" or anything that will release the negative pressure in us to stay calm. Three is using long and deep breathing as this can give a calming and soothing effect on us when we are faced with challenges. Four is connecting with our values where we ask, "Is this something that will make us happy?" or "Is it really what I want in life?", and it is a

powerful way to put us back in perspective. And the list goes on.

With the ability to be self-aware and self-manage, we become very rational people who make right decisions and do more things right than wrong. People will find us attractive, drawing them to us because we are positive, calm and patient. And the wonderful thing about this is, once we know ourselves well, we then make efforts to know others. Curiosity and interest will make us want to know them well. Here's where connection with people takes place that makes us powerful people connectors.

In the next lesson, we shall discuss People Mastery, the other part of connecting with people. With these two skills, we can then manage everyone in any circumstances. This is what all good coaches will want to be.

PATRICIA has all the qualifications of what a professional coach would love to have. Not only she's a certified coach from a reputable coaching association, she also has a string of degrees and many solid years of corporate experience. Anyone would have quickly jumped into the conclusion she is a first-class coach. But the truth is, she is not and is struggling to make ends meet.

One day, she decided to swallow her ego; she came to confide in me her problems in getting clients and the stormy relationship she has with them when she managed to get them to be her coachees that often end up losing them halfway through it. After asking her some questions and listening to her on what she does in getting clients and coaching them, I decided to do a role play where I acted as a coachee to her to experience her style of coaching. It was here I summarised my findings: she dominated the session like an expert who talked just too much with little listening to me; showed her impatience when I took a little more time to answer her questions; and got 'irritated' when my answers were not what she wanted to hear. So did I 'like' her? No!

