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## Coaching Principles: Clarity, Focus, Ease and Grace

by Maria Nemeth, Ph.D., MCC

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### Coaching Principles:

#### Part 4: Grace

Our final principle is grace. One definition of grace is that it is an unearned blessing. The gateway to grace-to seeing the blessings that surround us-is gratitude.

As a coach you can support your clients to bring gratitude to everyday living. Without it, goal attainment becomes another exercise in simply keeping promises. There is no elegance or enjoyment.

We're not spontaneously grateful. People have a natural tendency to look at what is not working in life. Our brains are hardwired for this. In prehistoric times, when we lived in caves, we didn't have fangs or fur and couldn't run very far. But we did have a brain that could look for everything that could go wrong. That's one of the factors that kept us alive: seeing the possibility of danger. A false-positive (seeing danger when there is none) was a better strategy to protect us from predators than a false negative (seeing no danger when there is).

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Fast forward a few hundred millennia. How many woolly mammoths are we likely to run into on our way to work? Try telling that to our brains. They still look for danger as though we were out in a dark forest.

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Your clients frequently come to coaching sessions with



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these fearful conversations in tow. As coaches we often buy into them without knowing it, simply by trying to process, manage, or diminish them. However, whatever we focus on grows and gathers strength—even when we're focusing on it in order to make it go away.

A far easier way is to encourage your clients to develop the capacity for gratitude. It opens the heart and brings them closer to the experience of grace.

**Example:**

Your client Alice is working on her hair salon's website with a consultant. He has asked her to give him some content material. She comes to see you highly agitated.

"I don't know how to do what he's asking. I'm not a writer. Whatever I write won't make sense. I couldn't spell my own name if I didn't already have it memorized!"

As her coach, here is a suggestion for an approach you could take:

You: "This is a big step for you."

Alice: "It sure is. I'm going to fail."

You: "I don't suppose there's anything to be grateful for here."

Alice: "Uh. I don't think so!"

You: "Nothing at all. Everything's going wrong."

Alice: "Well....."

You: "Now, don't lighten up too quickly."

Alice: "OK, OK. Last year at this time I didn't think I'd be able to open this business. And here I am about to launch my website. It is a miracle."

You: "Are you sure it's ok to be grateful about that?"

Alice: (Laughing) "Yes, I'm sure."

You: "How about trying an experiment with me? For the next two weeks, keep track of three things for which you are grateful in a notebook by your bedside. If you want you can bring the notebook with you next time and read a few examples out loud. Are you willing?"

Alice: "Sure: as long as you don't look at my spelling." (smiles)

The above scenario actually happened. The following



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session she brought her notebook and read six or eight items. Soon she was hooked on gratitude and frequently had her notebook with her. Try the above exercise with some of your clients and step aside as fear gives way to joy! They are training their brains to look for what's right instead of what's wrong.

### Summary:

We have looked at clarity, focus, ease and grace, and how to develop coaching strategies that employ these four principles. We bring clarity to coaching when we are aware that all of our clients-without exception-are heroes, with goals and dreams and a desire to make a difference. We can support them to focus upon what is already working and upon their creative ideas rather than their customary issues. Ease is attained when clients learn to take small, sweet steps toward goal-attainment, enjoying the journey along the way. Finally, they encounter grace as they awaken to the experience of gratitude.

Coaching is powerful in helping others to live the lives they were meant to live. It is no wonder that many of us consider it to be a philosophy, a profession, and a personally profound calling.

This concludes this series, you can find Parts I - III, and previous Expert Series articles online [HERE](#).

### About our Expert:

**Maria Nemeth, Ph.D., MCC**, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Master Certified Coach, is an internationally recognized speaker, author, and seminar leader. She is the founder and Creative Director of the Academy for Coaching Excellence. For more than 20 years, Dr. Nemeth has trained professional coaches, ministers, clinicians, executives, teachers, and private individuals using the coaching methods and skills that she has designed. Her courses and workshops have been taken by thousands of people who report significant, extraordinary changes in their lives as a result of these principles.

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