



Chopra Coach

COACHING MANUAL 2022

The Coaching Manual

This coaching manual will guide you through your coaching journey. In this manual, you'll find the same steps, pro tips, and topics that are covered in both the **Coaching Certification** and **Enrichment** course. Use this as a quick resource when coaching your clients.

...but first, a letter from Deepak Chopra!

A Letter from Deepak Chopra

Congratulations on completing the Chopra Coaching Certification Program!

Now that you've completed Chopra Coaching Certification program, you're ready to use this knowledge to transform lives, joining a select group of Chopra Certified Well-being Coaches.

You've learned to cultivate presence, offer soul reflections, ask questions to prompt inner discovery, and listen with full awareness. You've studied the four stages of change and the nature of the coaching relationship.

In this manual, you'll find rich coaching steps and fundamentals that guides you to help clients explore purpose, intention, meaning, and shadow. You'll examine these coaching cornerstones through the lens of Ayurveda, mindful awareness, and modern psychological research—then put them to use with your practice client.

As a Chopra Well-being coach, you will embody love in action. By helping clients move toward pure awareness, access their innermost desires, and shift their perspectives, you'll empower them to live their most authentic lives, free from self-imposed limitations. One client at a time, you will expand the collective consciousness— inching us closer to more joyful societies, a healthier planet, and a more peaceful world.

Take a moment of gratitude for the compassion that guides you, the knowledge that awaits you, and the lives you will soon transform.

Thank you again for being a part of the global community of Chopra educators. We are honored to have you.

Love,



Deepak Chopra

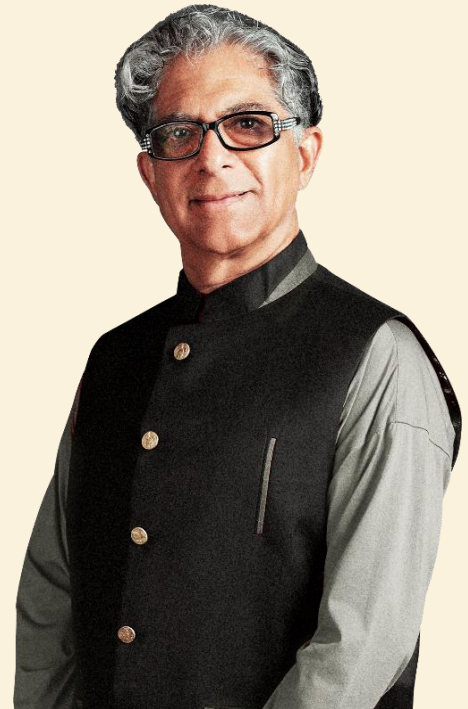
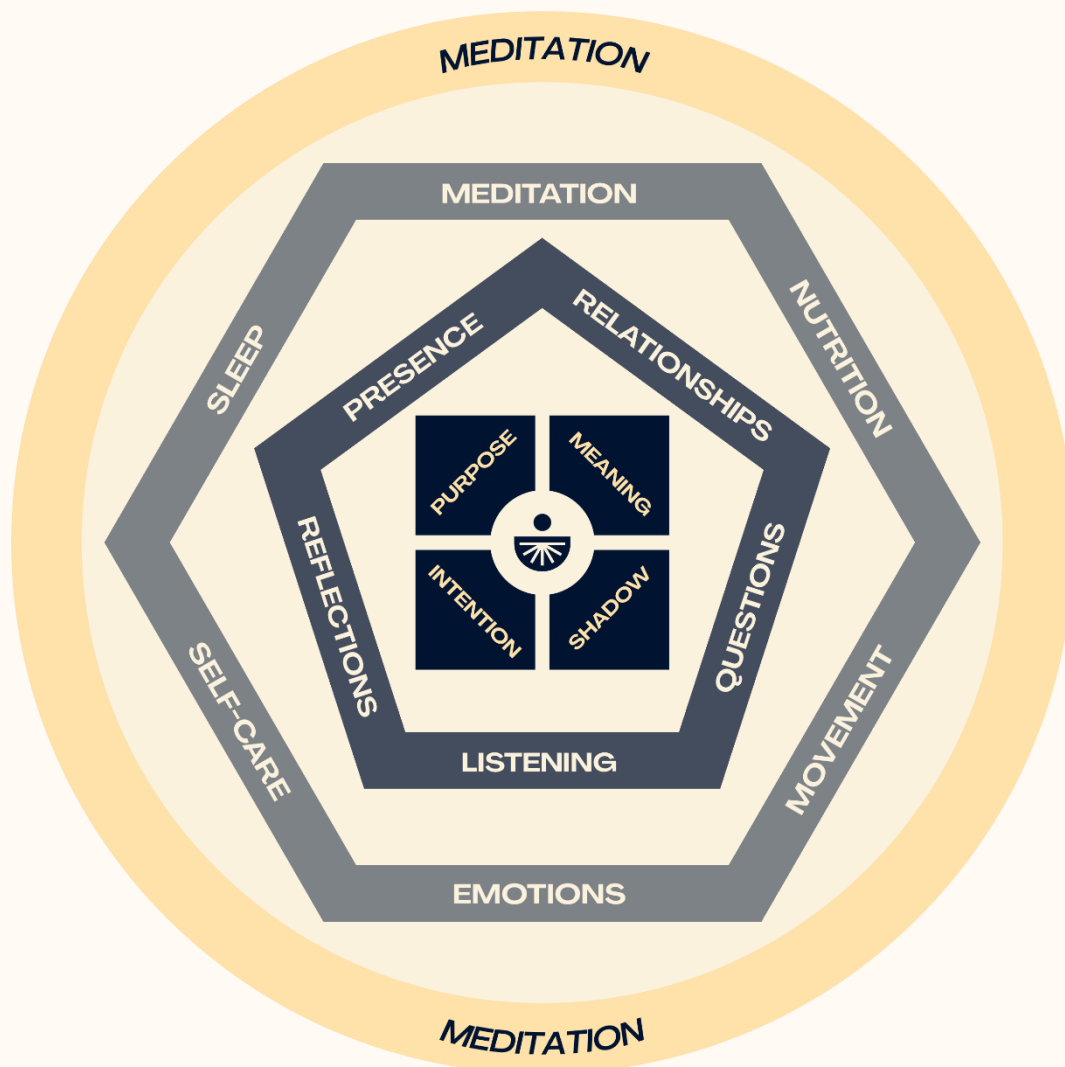


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Coaching Fundamentals

Coaching Manual *Enrichment*

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Becoming a Chopra Well-being Coach

Coaching 101

Coaching and Other Roles

How do various mentoring roles differ? As a Chopra-certified instructor, you've likely received requests to teach on an individual basis. You've taken what you've learned in a classroom environment and helped your students grow in their meditation and Ayurvedic practices.

Here is a list that separates the coach from the teacher, and from other mentorship roles:

- **The Teacher** (Holds knowledge)

In a teacher-student relationship, teachers play a key role in the education process. The student is the seeker of knowledge, and the teacher is the holder of that knowledge. The teacher shares information, processes, or philosophies through lectures, presentations, exercises, discussions, and other activities, and the student learns through listening, studying, reading, memorizing, writing, and test-taking.

The Coach (Provides guidance)

But information alone is not enough to effect behavior change, transformation, and healing. Coaches provide not only knowledge, but guidance at an individual level based on their clients' needs—including needs the client may not have yet identified.

While coaches (and especially Chopra-Certified Instructors) may also hold knowledge on various topics, it is not the coach's responsibility to act as a teacher unless the coach is knowledgeable and the situation calls for it.

As a Chopra-certified health and meditation instructor, you're welcome to switch to a teacher role in situations where your experience is appropriate (such as meditation and Ayurveda). But if your client needs education in managing their finances, for instance, you may or may not be the right educator for the job. In such cases, it may be more appropriate for a coach to refer their client to a consultant or teacher when specific, specialized information is needed.

- **The Therapist** (Focuses on healing the past)

While therapists tend to focus on helping patients heal from emotional pain and trauma, coaches spend only as much time as needed processing pain and difficulty in the present moment before inviting clients to shift their focus to their intentions, purpose, and vision.

The Coach (Paves the way toward future goals)

Therapy focuses on healing the past, and coaches recognize the need, they refer their clients to therapists or psychiatrists.

Coaching anchors the client into the present moment and paves the way to your client's future goals and aspirations. If we consider a scale of wellness from -2 (suffering) to +5 (flourishing), a therapist's job is to bring a patient from -2 (suffering) to 0 (neutral), while the goal of a coach is to move with a client from +2 (status quo) to +5 (flourishing).

Unconscious conditions, limiting beliefs, and unhealthy patterns are always present in any challenge, but rather than digging into their past for solutions, coaches guide their clients toward accepting the way things are and co-creating strategies for moving forward.

- **The Ayurvedic Counselor**

Much like a traditional doctor or therapist, an Ayurvedic counselor diagnoses mental and physical health conditions, but from an Ayurvedic perspective. They offer a range of services, including evaluating their clients' Vedic chart, pulse and tongue assessments, and providing Ayurvedic healing solutions including herbs, diets, and lifestyle practices.

The Coach

Chopra-certified coaches are not responsible for diagnosing or treating psychospiritual, mental, or physical health conditions, but instead focus on listening to their clients' needs and goals, only offering information when their expertise in meditation and Ayurveda become appropriate.

- **The Consultant**

Consultants include nutritionists, personal trainers, business consultants and anyone who comes in as an expert to create a plan to advise their clients on what to do and which actions to take. As the expert in their field, most of the work falls onto the shoulders of the consultant to assess their clients' needs, gather data, and form a plan to solve problems and implement their recommended strategies.

Once the consulting relationship is over, the client is personally responsible for continuing on the path that the consultant laid out for them.

The Coach

While consultants offer their expertise and recommendations to clients, coaches help to uncover their clients' own answers, make their own plans, and take responsibility for their own results. Coaches never claim to be the expert in their clients' lives.

- **The Guru**

The traditional guru is a spiritual teacher who has attained enlightenment and is therefore qualified to lead others to this goal. Like the Chopra Coach, a guru will teach meditation techniques. But in contrast, the guru will also transfer direct experience of their own meditative states into their students. The Guru relationship is built on tremendous loyalty and surrender, and can last even after the guru has passed.

The Coach

Fortunately, a coach does not need to be fully enlightened to help their clients move forward toward their life goals. While Chopra-certified coaches do have some personal experience on their spiritual path, their role is more to guide clients in deepening trust in their own innate wisdom.

What is Coaching?

Coaching is your dharma. Coaching is your opportunity to effect real change in your clients' lives. Rather than focusing on the past or healing a current wound, coaching can help bring your clients from where they are to where they want to be.

With true dedication, and by applying what you learn throughout this journey you've chosen for yourself, you'll be well-prepared to help others grow—while growing yourself in the process.

Coaching is Rooted in Change

A coach is an agent of change. When you choose the path of a Chopra-certified coach, you become a resource to help your clients achieve true and lasting change in their lives. Your role is not to force your client to make a change that you've suggested, but rather help guide them along the journey they've chosen for themselves.

The 4 Phases of Change:

- **Phase 1: Dissolving**

Once your client has identified a change they would like to make in their life, they may struggle with beginning the process of making the changes. This is because the first step of change is dissolving, or a loss of identity.

Habits, actions, and choices are a large part of a person's identity. To make lasting change, that identity needs to change. If your client needs support to quit smoking, they first need to think of themselves as a non-smoker. What does a non-smoker do after a meal? They don't smoke.

- **Phase 2: Imagining**

Imagining goes further than the big picture goal. It's your client's chance to begin thinking about the specific details of the new world they want to live in. They start to fill the gaps that were created in the dissolving phase.

What does a non-smoker do after a meal? Well, they don't smoke—but what does that look like? What do they do to fill that space of action that defined them after every meal for a number of years? Imagining is where they begin to ideate on ways to fill that void. Maybe they have a small piece of candy or gum. Maybe they brush their teeth. Maybe they choose the best course of action is to just move to the next activity. Imagining is where your client begins to envision a new life.

- **Phase 3: Reforming**

Now that your client has started to think about ways to fill the identity gap, it's time to begin implementing some of those ideas. Reforming is a time of action, and often a time of trial and error. It's easy to get discouraged during the reforming phase. Your client has spent time imagining solutions that will better their life, but when put into action, any slip or fall may be disheartening. Reforming takes time and requires energy, and it's easy to get fatigued.

Reforming is a critical time in the process of change. When your client is feeling impatient and frustrated, it's the coach's job to help to keep them on track. If the new non-smoker tried chewing a piece of gum after their meal but still suffered painful withdrawals after their meal, it reinforces their loss of identity. This tempts them back to a place where they felt comfortable, their old identity—the smoker.

Phase 4: Full Flight

After your client has dissolved their old identity, imagined a new one, and practiced reforming their new ideas into a stable routine—sometimes without even realizing it—they've reached full flight. This is where the new identity is stable.

The non-smoker doesn't need to think about being a non-smoker anymore; they just are.

The Coach's Role in Change

As an agent of change, the coach gently helps their client navigate forward through the phases of change to help them establish the new identity rather than regressing into the old identity. At no point does the coach decide what needs to change or how to change it—the client is the expert in their own life, and the coach is there to partner with them to keep them moving in the right direction.

Types of Coaching

What is coaching? A coach is an agent of change in their clients' lives.

But this change can be facilitated and measured in many different ways.

All coaches help their clients improve their daily lives, including facilitating transformation in careers, relationships, and health. They help identify their client's unique strengths and weaknesses, and help them capitalize on those strengths to achieve their life's goals. While some life coaches offer a more holistic service—

assisting their clients in any and all areas of life—other life coaches choose to niche in one specific area of life such as Relationship Coaches, Career Coaches, and Health Coaches.

Coaching programs generally distinguish themselves as offering performance coaching or developmental coaching.

Performance Coaching

Performance coaching is based solely on creating a successful outcome by reaching objective, measurable goals. This type of coaching focuses on prioritizing tasks, organizing schedules, creating effective routines, and tracking progress.

Developmental Coaching

Developmental coaching is focused primarily on the client cultivating new capacities and competencies. Clients are challenged to stretch and grow into a new and expanded identity. They're focused on increasing self-awareness, expanding their perspective or worldview, and aligning with a fulfilling life purpose.

Chopra Well-being Coaching

A Chopra well-being coach integrates both of these coaching methodologies, capitalizing on the health and meditation knowledge you've already gained, and adding a spiritual relationship that facilitates deep and lasting transformation.

Personalized to each client's unique dosha type, and grounded in both coaching psychology and Vedic wisdom, this coaching process focuses on enhancing the client's well-being in all domains of life and health.



The Chopra Coaching Model

The Chopra Coaching Model

The Chopra Coach

Chopra teachers make the best coaches.

To become eligible for the Chopra Coaching program, you've already achieved certification in both Chopra Meditation and Chopra Health programs. This gives you an overwhelming advantage over many well-being coaches in the industry. You're already knowledgeable about meditation and Ayurveda, so you're able to expand on wellness options you discuss with your clients, as well as offer meditation teaching as a way to tap into their full potential.

Chopra coaches are Ayurvedic health instructors.

Your understanding of a person's unique nature and current imbalances allows you to be more present and attentive to each client's individual needs. You can use this knowledge to be flexible from client to client. You know how to best communicate with each client, and how to consider their dosha type while listening to and communicating with your clients.

You're also more self-aware of your own doshic makeup, understanding characteristics within yourself that may affect your coaching style and presence.

Chopra coaches are meditation teachers.

You understand that through meditation all things are possible, and you're well-equipped to help your clients cultivate a meditation practice, or resume one if they've tapered off. Through your Chopra teacher portal, you're able to obtain a Primordial Sound mantra (per Terms of Use) for your client, perform the Primordial Sound mantra ceremony, and teach them how to use their mantra.

You're also aware of the value of meditation for yourself, and you're able to be present in the higher states of consciousness for your client.

The Coaching Fundamentals

- **Coaching Presence**

The coaching presence is about both being present and cultivating presence. You'll learn to clarify your role as a coach and what you bring into the coaching relationship, and how to remain present for your client during change.

- **Soul Reflections**

It's hard to see yourself fully without looking at your reflection. By offering soul reflections to your clients, you provide an opportunity for them to see themselves as others do. You'll learn how and when to offer perspective in a way that acknowledges your clients' experience while remaining empathetic and encouraging to their process.

- **Curious Questions**

The purpose of questions in a coaching relationship is to lead your client to a greater sense of self-discovery. You'll learn to peel back the layers by asking the right questions that lead to expanding awareness, fulfilling desires, aligning with dharma, and exploring the unconscious.

- **Mindful Listening**

Listening is one of the most fundamental skills required to be a successful coach, but most people don't actually know how to mindfully listen during conversation. In this course, you'll learn techniques to improve your listening skills, including where to listen from, what to listen for, and how awareness of the dosha constitution of both you and your client can improve your listening even more.

- **Coaching Relationship**

The relationship between coach and client is unique. Although you'll find you'll gain insight from working with clients that you haven't had before, it's largely a one-way street. You are there to support your client—not the other way around.

You'll also learn how and when to transition from coach to teacher and back again, and when it's appropriate to do so.

Chopra Coaching Cornerstones

The four cornerstones of the Chopra coaching model are unique exercises you can add to your toolkit.

These exercises will help your clients get to the core of their being. They're essential tools to help facilitate change and align with dharma.

The Four Cornerstones:

1. **Purpose**

Purpose is the experience of fully understanding the expansive and conventional "I".

Think of the first and third soul questions: "Who am I?" "What is my purpose?"

2. **Intention**

The knowledge of intention puts the power of the outcome in the hands of the individual.

Think of the second and fourth soul questions: "What do I want?" "What am I grateful for?"

3. **Meaning**

Action without meaning holds no value. The meaning behind action is the driving force that sustains positive change.

Think of the question: "How are my beliefs limiting my potential?"

4. Shadow

Shadow is the emotional ama that sticks to past experiences and prevents growth. Shadow work is the process of clearing that ama.

Think of the question: "What's holding me back?"



Getting Your Practice Client

Getting Your Practice Client

Get Prepared to Practice

Practice clients prepare you for real world coaching. One of the most exciting parts of the Chopra Coaching program is working directly with practice clients and coaching triads to get experience and feedback in a productive and supportive way.

There are two primary ways you'll gain this experience:

- Enroll practice clients with people you know who want to heal, grow, or change
- Practice in triad coaching sessions with your peers

Choosing the Right Client

Your practice client is someone you'll develop a coaching relationship with and practice new skills weekly as you learn.

There's a vulnerability in being a client—your practice client will be sharing in a more intimate way than most people are accustomed to. But there is also a vulnerability for you as a new coach as you build new skills through some trial and error. It's important to choose a practice client where you share a mutual sense of trust and comfort.

It might feel natural to identify close friends and family members for this role, but they actually don't make the best clients. The people you're closest to will relate with you from a pre-existing role and relational context that doesn't always serve your learning or their growth.

Other coaches may also not provide the most ideal practice because they already know the rules of the game and easily play along in a way that won't give you as realistic of a sense of what it's like to coach someone who is brand new to coaching.

The best clients are people you know—but not too well. They're people you know tangentially or referrals from a friend or family member.

Most importantly, your practice client should be someone who wants to be coached.

A moderate to strong desire to change is a prerequisite for coaching to work. Make sure your practice client is agreeing to be coached because they are looking for a change in themselves—not just as just a favor to you.

Visualize your Ideal Client

Start by visualizing your ideal practice client.

If you're not sure who you want to choose as your practice clients, think about fictional characters—or personas—to help you visualize your ideal client.

Personas: Personas, or fictional characters, exemplify the qualities of people who are good candidates for your practice coaching clients.

Here are 3 Personas:

1. **The recoverer:** Joe has encountered a traumatic event related to addiction, illness, or injury. He's in his late 30's and married, living in a major city. Although he regularly practices self-care, he still worries a lot about the future. He's in a low-income range, but still finds time to enjoy traveling during his free time, especially in nature. He sometimes has trouble communicating with his partner and co-workers.

Joe is seeking coaching to help with nutrition, movement, and emotions.

2. **The improver:** Janet is a 42-year-old mother of two teenage boys. Her father just passed, and she's trying to manage her grief while still staying on top of all of her boys' after-school activities—not to mention her own career! She's interested in applying for a promotion at her job, but finds it difficult to make time for herself and de-stress amidst all her responsibilities and aspirations. She practices some breathing techniques a few times a week to calm down, but has fallen out of her meditation practice.

Janet is seeking coaching to help with nutrition, meditation, and self-care.

3. **The spiritual seeker:** Rachel considers herself a spiritual person, but has had trouble lately connecting with a higher power. She's got loads of responsibilities as an executive in her high-paying job and practices yoga and meditation every day to de-stress. Still, she has trouble letting the chaos of her day go and has trouble falling asleep. She's heard of Ayurveda and is open to trying new ways to feel more connected with nature, especially if it helps her on her spiritual journey.

Rachel is seeking coaching to help with sleep, meditation, and self-care.

Select anyone who may be feeling stuck or who's ready for comprehensive well-being.

The Chopra coaching client may come from a variety of backgrounds. It can be anyone who feels ready and committed to healing, growing, and changing can make a great client of the Chopra Coaching Method.

Here are a few other common characteristics of many Chopra coaching clients:

- They've recently completed a Chopra program and want support to begin integrating and stabilizing Chopra practices, insights, and new ways of being into their life
- They've taken Chopra courses in the past but have fallen away from their practices and need support and accountability to get back to their intentions and practices
- They feel like something is missing in their life but they can't quite put a finger on what it is

The Coaching Process

Here's what you and your practice client can expect during the practice coaching sessions.

The coaching process is dynamic, flexible, non-linear, and sometimes messy, but the Chopra Coaching method you'll be learning during Certification can be summarized into four well-organized parts.

1. Consultation

The consultation is a 15-20 minute meeting to evaluate whether the coach and the client are a good fit. By the end of the consultation, you'll have started building rapport and will understand why now is a good time in your clients life to start coaching. This is more of a "get-to-know-you" meeting than a deep dive into their lives.

Take this opportunity to align on the time expectation and logistics of the coaching arrangement, and help them understand the value and purpose of a coaching relationship.

2. Intake

Once you've decided that the coach-client relationship is a good fit, you'll schedule a 45-minute intake session where you'll continue to design the coach-client relationship by learning who your client is on a deeper level—as well as how they want to be coached.

In this session, you'll review the completed intake assessment and use powerful questions to explore the responses that piqued your curiosity.

If your client has an interest in meditation or health, you may also choose to use the prakruti and vikruti quiz. Remember to practice integrating the role of teacher and coach with special emphasis on using your new coaching skills.

The intake session can and should feel organic. Remember that the most important outcome of this session is a deeper understanding and connection with the client and a readiness to start the coaching journey.

3. Core Sessions

After the intake session, you'll pick up where you left off and guide your client through another eight core coaching sessions. That means you'll be coaching two sessions per coaching cornerstone—alternating between structured and improvised. The following eight sessions are approximately 45-minutes in length. For each of the four cornerstones, you'll:

- Guide your client through one structured coaching session
- Follow up the next session with an improvised—less structured and less predictable—coaching session around the same cornerstone

Almost anything can happen from session to session, but you'll want to do your best to follow the core coaching curriculum and follow along with the coaching worksheets as closely as possible. Remember, the purpose of practice clients is to learn how to coach.

4. Final Session

Your final session with your client is an exciting time. At this point, you've truly facilitated change in their life. During the final session, you'll help them:

- Reflect on their journey
- Receive feedback
- Plan their next steps to continue moving forward after your coaching relationship ends

Enroll your Practice Client

1. Brainstorm possible clients

Think about people who already seek your guidance on life issues, or people in your life that you share a mutual trust with. Consider people you'd enjoy getting to know better, or people who are going through something difficult and are ready to make a change. Think about friends, family members, or professional peers who you could ask for client referrals.

2. Reach out

Start with people on your list who check all of the boxes and you're most comfortable with. For the initial contact, use any method of communication that feels authentic to you and is most likely to get a response.

In your initial message, you can include:

- Why you're reaching out
- Why you've chosen them
- What they might expect
- The time commitment

3. Have a conversation

Now it's time to reiterate why you've chosen them. Then, before going deep into your pitch, ask them why they took you up on their offer. Share your experiences in Health and Meditation, and why you're already well-equipped to support them. Explain what a coach is (and isn't), and that you're still in training. This will give you permission for imperfection and decrease the pressure and expectation from your practice client.

Finally, reiterate the time commitment—one initial 45-minute intake session, eight 45-minute sessions over the course of twelve weeks (2 weeks on, 1 week off), and one 45-minute conclusion session.

In your own words, ask your client:

- Is coaching with me something you'd be interested in?

- (If yes, or maybe) What parts of your wellbeing seem to be strong, and where are you currently facing challenges?
- What do you hope will be different after 8 weeks of coaching?

4. Handle the logistics

Now that you and your practice client have come to an agreement, it's time to handle the logistics. You'll want to send your confirmed practice client the Coaching Agreement, Intake Form, Prakruti and Vikruti quizzes. You'll want to schedule the 8 sessions, and make agreements around scheduling alternative sessions during the same week if the original time doesn't work.



Presence

Coaching Presence & Relationship

Your Coaching Presence

The first step is knowing yourself. Presence is the space in which the coaching conversation takes place. Every truth told, every commitment made, every belief revealed, arises in presence—the space of pure awareness. What coaching presence do you want to have?

Throughout your journey in Ayurveda and meditation experiences, you've gotten to know yourself on a higher level. You've discovered your doshic combinations that tell you why you're unique, and you've experienced higher states of consciousness that show you you're ultimately one with everyone and everything.

As a coach, it's important to hold these truths during interactions with your client. The most important gift a coach can offer the client is their presence.

The Doshas as Coaches

Your unique doshic nature lends a hand in anticipating what kind of coaching presence you'll cultivate. By recognizing the strengths and challenges of your doshic nature, you'll be well-equipped to create a presence that serves both you and your client.

Understanding your doshic nature is the first step.

Because you already know several Ayurvedic balancing techniques, you're able to recognize and treat any doshic imbalances you may be experiencing. On any given day, you may experience signs of imbalance with any of the three doshas—especially if you're bidoshic or tridoshic. It's important to continue practicing these balancing techniques throughout your coaching career so you can serve your clients with a presence of a healthy mind and body.

Being Present

Focus on the here and now.

Anchoring into the present moment begins with both the coach and client setting the intention to keep their attention completely focused on the here and now. This is where your consistent meditation practice will help you. It cultivates the ability to stay present in the moment. It also allows you to notice when your own experiences and feelings may be coming up, and move your attention back to the present moment. Creating presence requires you to let go of any emotional ama you may be holding on to so you can focus completely on your client.

Your own meditation and Ayurvedic practices will cultivate the intuitive response and allow you to witness what's happening in your mind and body—allowing the creative response to unfold naturally rather than letting past experiences influence the interaction.

Just like you, your client also comes with doshic tendencies and imbalances. Fortunately, since you provided them with a *Prakruti* and *Vikruti* quiz before you began the core sessions of the coaching process, you already have a basic understanding of your client.

Creating Presence

Be mindful of your presence.

Understanding your tendencies and the tendencies of your client gives you a giant advantage over many other types of coaching relationships. Before you even begin to really get into the coaching sessions, you've already begun to understand some of the imbalances that may be holding your client back—and you may even have a few ideas on how to return them to a state of balance.

But before jumping into a teacher's role and offering solutions during your first few interactions, you'll need to put those ideas in your back pocket and create a presence of pure awareness.

Meditation

You've already experienced the healing and balancing power of meditation in your own life and witnessed the transformation in others through your teaching practices.

At the beginning of each session, you'll guide your client through a meditation, allowing both the coach and client to pause all doing and rest in the stillness. Through this practice, you'll both shift to a compassionate, witnessing presence that observes all phenomena—thoughts, emotions, sounds, sensations—with a sense of acceptance and curiosity.



Being Present During Change

Being Present During Change

Coaching is Rooted in Change

What are the 4 stages of change?

- **Phase 1: Dissolving**—Characterized by a loss of identity.
- **Phase 2: Imagining**—Characterized by envisioning a new life.
- **Phase 3: Reforming**—Characterized by implementation & action.
- **Phase 4: Full flight**— Meaning the new identity is stable.

Identifying Fear Responses to Change

The 7 biological responses to change

As your client moves from dissolving to imagining, imagining to reforming, and reforming to full flight, any of the 7 biological responses to change may begin to surface. As a coach, it's your responsibility to help gently guide your client from reacting from fear to embracing with love.

Fear Response: Fight-flight-freeze

Fight-flight-freeze is the most primitive response of our nervous system. Although it's often perceived as a bad thing, it's still useful in cases of extreme danger or physical harm—but when you're trying to effect change, the fight-flight-freeze response will keep your client in a reactive state, unable to move forward to effect positive change. Even when change is good for us and necessary for our growth, it is not unusual for the stress response to kick in when we move from our known habits to the unknown.

Fear Response: The reactive response

Because you'll know your client's doshic makeup, you'll have a greater understanding of which reaction they may be experiencing, allowing you to more quickly and effectively identify the reactive, or psychological version of the fight-flight-freeze response.

The Vata

Joe has a Vata predominance and tends to react to change with the flight response. You may notice that instead of facing his problems, he quickly moves on to other topics or provides unrelated solutions to sidestep the actual problem at hand. Instead of focusing on the long-term goals you discussed with him during your intake session, he's been thinking about taking a vacation to get away from his partner for a few days.

The Pitta

Rachel is a Pitta type. She tends to react to change with the fight response. When circumstances seem out of her control, she actively fights the natural ebb and flow of change in her life. Alternatively, when

the change she's introduced at work isn't happening quickly enough, she becomes impatient and angry with herself and others, keeping her up at night in a constant reactive state.

The Kapha

Janet is a Kapha type through and through. After the passing of her father, she completely froze—pausing all progress toward her career goals. Although you've assigned her homework after each session, she consistently shows up without having completed it. She often provides excuses that her home life with two teenagers is too chaotic, but even those responsibilities are showing signs of neglect. She often avoids talking about her progress because she's still feeling stuck and unable to change her old habits and outlooks.

Because all three doshas still exist in every individual to some extent, your clients may exhibit any of the reactive responses, no matter their dosha type. You may find that their current reactions also provide insight into their vikruti. When a client is stuck in the fear-responses, they're obstructing change, making it difficult to effect change.

In addition to other dosha-balancing techniques, you already know one technique to help guide your client from reacting with fear to responding with love.

Shifting to Love Responses to Change

When your client is exhibiting rationalization, justification, hopelessness, or other ego reactions like fight-flight-freeze, it's time to introduce the most powerful tool to shift from fear to love.

Love Response: The restful awareness response

Meditation is the key to unlocking the love responses to change. It shifts the internal reference point from ego to spirit, and it's a simple yet effective way to achieve the more evolved biological responses.

When you introduce a meditation at the beginning of every session with your client, you allow both you and your client to operate with a positive and forward-thinking mindset.

Love Response: The intuitive response

With a regular meditation practice, Joe has begun to act from his inner understanding rather than reacting to the external world. With the intuitive response, he's beginning to recognize his inclination to try to escape. During one of your sessions with him, he shared that he wasn't able to find his keys when he tried to leave the house in the middle of an argument with his partner. As a result, he stuck around for the conversation and ended up coming to a compromise. More and more, he's noticing synchronicities that lead him to work through issues rather than trying to escape them.

Love Response: The creative response

After working with you for a few weeks, Rachel realized that although she was practicing meditation daily, she was focusing on her thoughts rather than on the gap. Now that she's able to clear her head through meditation, creative solutions to her problems at work have begun to arise. Instead of reacting with frustration to her direct reports who haven't embraced the changes she tried to implement, she realized the issue wasn't a process problem, but a communication issue. Instead of operating from a place of fear, she's grown to look forward to her challenges as opportunities to flex up her creativity.

Love Response: The visionary response

Janet's father has always been a hero to her. In his passing, she forgot some of the lessons he taught her—to always act with love, trust, and an open mind. Now, instead of trying to manage every aspect of her teens' lives, she's given them both more freedom to make their own decisions about homework and after-school activities. To her surprise, both boys received straight A's and have been choosing to stay home for family dinner almost every night.

Rather than focusing on her own ambition at work, she's started to look at the bigger picture and where she could better serve. Instead of moving up the corporate ladder, she decided to take on a new role in the community outreach department of her company, and she's never been happier or more fulfilled.

Love Response: The sacred response

Through your experience as a meditation and health teacher, you've learned to go beyond the constricted ego-based awareness to recognize "self" not only in yourself, but also in others. You've already begun your journey to expand the constricted view of "What's in it for me?" to the expanded view of "How can I be of service?"—and that's what brought you to this program.

Hold on to this intention, act from a place of love, and you'll guide your clients to achieve these same kinds of responses to change.

Bringing in Balance

Prakruti

What can be balanced. Identifying your client's basic nature will help both you and your client move forward through change in an informed and strategic way. But it's also important to note that a person's prakruti doesn't change. It is their essential nature, and they'll face both advantages and challenges due to that nature throughout their life.

Once a Swan, always a Swan.

By understanding your client's prakruti, you have another giant advantage over other types of coaches. You'll be able to identify where trying to change does not serve the client—which is just as important to recognize as when change is beneficial (and possible). So, instead of trying to support a Vata type's desire to change into

someone they're not (say, a Kapha), you'll know when to encourage self-forgiveness and acceptance rather than steering your client further down a road they can't achieve.

That said, you do hold knowledge on dosha-balancing techniques, and if your client's doshas are showing signs of an accumulation or imbalance, you're well-equipped to guide them closer to a state of balance.

Design the alliance

Although the Doshic lens offers a powerful way of understanding your client, A Chopra-certified Coach should also be acutely aware of any assumptions they may be making about their client. The Coaching Relationship is a co-creative process where the client has an opportunity to coach you on how they want to be coached.

During the intake session with your client, you'll ask a few questions to design the alliance with specific agreements, expectations, and requests. These responses may correlate with your client's dosha constitution, or they may offer additional insight helping you to co-create the relationship.

Here are a few questions you might ask:

- How do you like to be held accountable?
- How do you want to be coached when you're stressed?
- What should I remind you of when you get stuck?
- How do you want to be motivated?
- What do you need from me as your coach?
- What else is important that I know about you?



Relationship

The Coaching Relationship

The coaching relationship is built on four unequivocal truths.

The Four Truths of the coaching relationships are:

1. Clients are their own gurus. They're the experts on their own lives.

Even though you may have training and experience in specific areas, you still need to ask empowering questions rather than offering unwarranted wisdom, suggestions, or advice.

By encouraging your client to find their own path, you help them develop autonomy and self-efficacy. In general, clients are more likely to take action when they're the ones that come up with the idea.

2. The client's true self is already whole and complete.

There's nothing that needs to be fixed in your client. Their true nature is just as whole and complete as yours is, and everyone around you.

By looking past your client's ego identity and tapping into their soul identity, you're able to continually hold the vision of what's possible.

3. The past is unchangeable. The present and future are spaces of infinite potential.

Coaches recognize that their client's past karmic conditions have formed them into the person they are today. But that conditioning can be transformed in the present moment, without any need to go into what brought them here.

Coaching is a creative process that helps clients uncover deep desires in the present moment and work towards manifesting them in the future.

4. The coach and the client are part of an equal partnership.

This relationship is different from the relationship between teacher and students, doctors and patients, mentors and mentees, and consultants and clients—which are all characterized by a built-in hierarchy in which one role is elevated above the other.

Your role as a coach is that of a “spiritual friend” whose relationship is focused primarily on the purpose of the client's growth and transformation.

Building Trust

Co-creating trust

The relationship between the coach and client is a powerful alliance built on trust. From the very first session, the coach and client design the relationship to be a safe container, customized to meet the specific needs of the client.

Clients grow not only because of what their coach does for them, but also—and perhaps even more so—because of the relationship that develops between them. The character of the coach and the level of consciousness they embody can have a powerful effect on what the client is able to achieve.

Vulnerability

As a coach, you may begin by looking at your own perception of vulnerability and working with it until you can see that vulnerability is actually a positive, life-affirming emotion that can lead to empowerment and connection. If you're not comfortable showing vulnerability with your client, how would you expect them to share their vulnerabilities with you?

Practicing vulnerability as a coach is a delicate balance. It's important to keep the confidence of the client while still divulging what's true in your own life, which may include your imperfections. This might look like admitting that you've made a mistake in the coaching conversation. Or it might be acknowledging that you've had a stressful morning and are looking forward to the 3–5-minute meditation at the beginning of your coaching session.

Whenever you share, do it in a way that avoids inviting the client to offer help or guidance to you. After all, the coaching relationship is not a 2-way street. Sharing too much may put you at risk of losing the client's respect and trust.

Unconditional Positive Regard

Unconditional positive regard is the Chopra coach's practiced attitude or stance towards the client. It's a continuous choice to see the client as naturally creative, resourceful, and whole—no matter the conditions. Chopra coaches inherently recognize that clients are always doing the best they can given their past conditioning, the circumstances they're up against in the present moment, and their current level of consciousness.

***A Healthy Dose of Detachment**—Don't be attached to the fruit of your coaching—or the end result—but instead focus on the journey between you and your client.*

Unconditional positive regard does not mean that coaches have to agree with or like the choices their clients make. It only means that coaches respect and accept the individual process of each client and understand that their journey will unfold in its own unique way.

Compassion and empathy

The pain your client feels in difficult times is the same pain that you feel during difficult times. The triggers and circumstances may be different, as well as the degree of pain, but pain is part of the human experience.

As a coach, you'll help clients remember our common humanity. When a client slips, breaks down, or gets stuck, their feelings of failure and inadequacy are often compounded by an irrational but pervasive sense of isolation—as if they're the only person in the world who has ever made a mistake.

But when you get your client in touch with our common humanity, it's easier for them to remember that feelings of inadequacy and disappointment are universal. To help build trust, mindfully tell a story of a time when you, too, felt the way your client is feeling. Keep the story short—this is not your time to share—but sometimes a personal story illustrating the connection and compassion you feel can deepen your spiritual friendship.

Setting Boundaries

As important as it is to make yourself open and available to your client, it's also important to set boundaries—as it is in other types of health and wellbeing relationships. It is easy to take on the stress, energy, or emotions of a client if you are not aware of your individual nature and the tendencies you have related to boundaries.

The Vata coach

A Vata coach may be very empathic due to their openness and Space and Air qualities, therefore have to be extra consistent with clearing or grounding practices before and after sessions. This may mean allowing space between each session to do a short meditation, or a clearing light visualization, rather than just at the end of the day. As people-pleasers, Vatas may go above and beyond for each client which can lead to emotional and physical fatigue.

The Pitta coach

A Pitta coach may overbook themselves, as they don't usually believe in 'down time', yet they too need to create space in the day so they don't burn out. Due to their fire qualities, they may need fewer breaks than others, but still need to bookend days with meditation. In addition, due to their natural confidence and charisma, they need to set boundaries with clients who become too attached and ask for more time with the coach than agreed upon in the agreement.

The Kapha coach

Kapha coaches usually have stronger boundaries due to their grounded and practical Earth and Water nature. But due to their stamina and laid-back attitude, they may be prone to allowing a client to go over time, or add on hours during the week to accommodate a client. An awareness around taking on too much is important, as is learning to set boundaries around their time.



Integrating Roles

Integrating Roles

Who's Driving?

The teacher-student relationship

As a Chopra-certified teacher, you acted as the holder of the knowledge, and it was your responsibility to instill that knowledge into your students. You drove the conversation, introducing meditation and Ayurveda concepts and practices in a structured way to ensure the best retention of the information.

But as a Chopra-certified coach, the relationship is different. The client is in control.

The coach-client relationship

In the coach-client relationship, your client is in the driver's seat. In this relationship, the client is the holder of the knowledge—they're the experts in their own lives.

The Value of a Chopra-Certified Teacher

Your experience as a student

For some Chopra-certified coaches, the practices of meditation and Ayurveda are new. Others have been living these lifestyle practices for years. As a student of the Chopra library of courses, you've learned to tap into your essential self and work on your own dosha imbalances—allowing you to be fully present and able to show up as your best self for your clients throughout this new coaching journey.

Your experience as a teacher

Throughout your Chopra teacher training experiences, you've learned to become a meditation expert, with access to custom Primordial Sound Mantras for your students. You've learned how to help your students find the gap—the ubiquitous space of infinite potential. You've also learned how to assess your students' prakruti and vikruti, their ama and ojas, and you've learned to provide balancing techniques through the six pillars of health.

These are all essential skills in the Chopra coaching philosophy. But information alone is not enough to bring about behavior change, transformation, and healing. The way you integrate this wisdom into your relationship is taken to the next level in the Chopra coaching model.

Shifting Roles

How do I make the transition between coach and teacher clear?

- Before offering your expertise, ask your client if they would like to hear it.
- For example, "You sound stuck. Can I offer a teaching moment?"
- End the teaching moment with follow-up questions—"What resonated? What didn't?"

When is the transition between coach and teacher appropriate?

- Give the client an opportunity to come to their own conclusions before stepping into the teacher role.
- If your client asks for your expertise, it's okay to share it.
- Think about if education is truly what the client needs. Do they have gaps in knowledge you can help to fill?

Remember: When a client comes to their own conclusions, they own it more fully. Coaching empowers the client to make the final choice.



Listening

Listening

Where to Listen From

The Listening Presence

New coaches sometimes underestimate the power of listening.

There's a common belief that to provide value, coaches need to say or contribute something profound and wise. But the truth is, sometimes just listening is truly the only thing the client really needs.

Your ability to act from the higher states of consciousness, fully aware of your listening presence, is fundamental to be able to move on to the other core skills of questioning and reflecting.

Listening from the higher states of consciousness

Our awareness shapes our experience of life. When it's expanded, we experience lightness of being and the freedom to play, love, and create. We're able to see the opportunities all around us. But when our awareness is constricted, we tend to only see problems and obstacles. This is why awareness is the coach's most valuable tool.

As a coach, when you operate from the higher states of consciousness, you're able to listen from a state of oneness and pure potential. Although your client is ultimately responsible for their own results, your own level of awareness has a significant impact on the level of awareness your client can achieve.

In your meditation and Ayurveda teaching experience, you learned mindful awareness techniques and practices to help move you between the states of consciousness. With a regular meditation practice, you're more likely to operate from the higher states. Instead of operating from the basic waking and dreaming states, you access soul consciousness, cosmic, divine, and ultimately a sense of unity—when you experience no separation; everything is merged in oneness and wholeness.

When a coach is fully present, they're able to observe and manage their own energy, thoughts, and emotions during the coaching sessions.

Self-centered Listening

What do I do when my mind wanders?

It's natural to get lost in your own thought. Your brain is wired to draw connections from conversation to your own life experiences, but that isn't always helpful when you're working with your client.

During conversations with your client, you may experience inward-focused or ego-centric thoughts.

You might think:

- *“I’m not doing this right!”*
- *“My client just isn’t getting it.”*
- *“Uh oh. I have the same problem as my client and I’m still unsure what to do.”*

What to do

As a meditation teacher, you’re familiar with the process of returning your attention to the silence or a mantra when your mind begins to wander. During your coaching conversations, you can use this same skill to return your attention to listening.

If your mind has wandered to the point where you’ve disconnected from actively listening, or if you’ve missed important information, it may be necessary to pause the conversation and own what happened. A large part of the coaching relationship is honesty.

You can say:

“I’m sorry—my attention drifted for a moment. Can you repeat that?”

As long as this isn’t a regular occurrence and your apology isn’t overburdened by the ego with guilt or embarrassment, this can be seen by the client as a humble act of vulnerability and contribute to the common humanity that you and your client share.

Listen with your doshic energies.

You may notice that certain listening skills come easier to you, and some require a little more effort. No matter what your *prakruti* is, you still have all the doshic energies within you and can draw upon all 3 qualities.

Focused Listening

Listening absorbed in the other

When we practice focused listening, we direct all our attention to the other person—with curiosity, interest, and engagement.

Pitta energy

When we use our Pitta energy, we’re naturally laser-focused. We can use this to pick up on every nuance in the conversation including checklist items like what inspires the client, what makes them come alive, and what they’re like when they’re at their best.

Compassionate Listening

Listening with love

This kind of listening comes from the level of the heart. You're listening with complete acceptance and love, without judgment or evaluation. All the client's words land like a child's first words on the ears of a proud parent. All failures and successes are met with acceptance and equanimity.

Kapha energy

When we access our Kapha energy, we're naturally compassionate. We create a refuge for the client that they may not experience with other relationships in their life—a safe space for them to be fully who they are.

Intuitive Listening

Listening for infinite potential

Intuitive listening expands your awareness beyond what you hear, see, and perceive through your five senses. You're listening from the level of infinite potential.

Vata energy

When we use our Vata energy, we listen energetically and often act with intuition. We naturally pick up on transcendental energies that go beyond the five senses during conversation.



The Doshas in Conversation

The Doshas in Conversation

Balancing your client's energy

Although you may have a predominance of one or two doshas, you're also aware of the presence of all three doshas in your constitution. During your coaching conversations, you can draw on all three doshas to connect with the various types of listening—recognizing when you're listening from a self-centered point of view and shifting to listening absorbed in your client, with compassion, and with intuition.

Your client also comes with their own prakruti, and various levels of imbalance in their vikruti. This will affect how they show up during sessions and can change from week to week. You can draw on your knowledge of the three doshas to provide a coaching presence that aids in balancing your client—no matter what your dosha type is.

Vata

Vatas in conversation

When your client has a Vata predominance in their prakruti or a Vata imbalance in their vikruti, you may notice signs of distraction and sensitivity.

Balancing Vata energy

By tapping into your Pitta and Kapha energies, you can gently help to keep your Vata clients focused and grounded.

How do I balance my client's Vata energy?

- Gently guide them to stay focused
- Speak clearly
- Ask single questions at a time
- Be patient and grounded
- Speak slowly and calmly
- Show your support

Pitta

Pittas in conversation

When your client has a Pitta predominance in their prakruti or a Pitta imbalance in their vikruti, you may notice signs of judgment—both of themselves and of their coach.

Balancing Pitta energy

With Pitta clients, you'll need to match their wit and show your expertise before gently expanding their energies. By tapping into your Vata and Kapha energy, you can gently model kindness and softness.

How do I balance my client's Pitta energy?

- Help expand their thinking with open-ended questions
- Encourage them to ask their heart for answers instead of their head
- Show your knowledge and expertise
- Communicate directly
- Stay patient and allow them to reach their own conclusions

Kapha

Kaphas in conversation

When your client has a Kapha predominance in their prakruti or a Kapha imbalance in their vikruti, you may find some reluctance to share.

Balancing Kapha energy

By tapping into your Pitta and Vata energy, you can gently push your Kapha clients to contribute.

How do I balance my client's Kapha energy?

- Give them a few creative options and let them respond
- Encourage them to imagine new possibilities
- Help direct the conversation to actionable items
- It's okay to push them a little bit
- Get comfortable with some silence
- Be patient, and wait for their answers

The Beginner's Mindset

The three doshas are in everyone

Just like you, your client has all three doshic energies in their constitution. No matter what their dosha type, any of the doshic tendencies may emerge. While providing the prakruti and vikruti quizzes during your intake session does give you some insight into their nature, it does not predict what your client will say or how they might act.

Coaches need to operate from an attitude of openness and eagerness, without preconceived conclusions or expectations about how the client will respond. We call this perspective the beginner's mindset.

Personal prejudices and expectations may influence the way your client answers the vikruti questions. In the coaching relationship, the vikruti quiz is not intended to be the single source of truth for your client's suffering. You'll gain much more insight by listening from the beginner's mindset—without judgment or expectation—from a place of curiosity.

As you listen from the higher states of consciousness, you'll peel back the layers they've built up over time. You'll begin to identify their doshic energies as they come up in conversation.



What to Listen For

What to Listen For

Active Listening

Coachable moments are doorways of transformation.

When your client says something that piques your curiosity, you'll intuitively want to dig a little deeper.

What are the primary types of coachable moments?

1. Compliance with intention
2. Lack of coherence
3. Contraction, expansion, or emotion
4. Teaching opportunities
5. Conscious inner shifts
6. The silence

Compliance with Intention

Some things to look out for when listening for signs of compliance with intention:

- Stories of success
- Strengths and strategies they used to succeed
- Self-regulation
- Self-sabotage
- Limiting beliefs

Lack of Coherence

Some signs of a lack of coherence:

- Inconsistencies with what they're saying and how they're saying it
- "Should", "Supposed to", or "Ought to"
- Pressure, conflict, or obligation
- Defensive joking or sarcasm

Contraction, Expansion, or Emotion

Some signs of contraction, expansion, or emotion:

- A trembling voice
- A shift in the pace of the conversation
- Smiling or laughing
- Crying or frowning
- Your own emotional reactions to your client's story

Teaching Opportunities

Some things to look out for when listening for a teaching opportunity:

- Some thing Gaps in meditation or Ayurveda understanding
- Experiences that can be enhanced by your knowledge

Conscious Inner Shift

Some signs of a conscious inner shift:

- Changes in behavior
- Changes in perspective

Every external change the client makes in their life is correlated with an internal shift.

What to do: When you encounter a coachable moment, it may be time to insert yourself into the conversation.

The Silence

The space of infinite possibility

During your conversations, you'll notice periods of extended silence. Just like during your meditation practice, moments of silence are spaces of infinite possibility. It's an opportunity to pause and tap into your client's inner wisdom.

Make the most out of the silence with these 4 steps (*Based on Gregory Kramer's Insight Dialogue practice.*)

1. Pause, breathe, and expand

Before automatically or habitually responding to the client, pause for an extra beat. Breathe. Relax your body and let go of any awkwardness around needing to have something to say. Consciously open your heart, extending your loving attention to your client.

2. Listen deeply

Within the silence, check in with what you hear from the level of curiosity, compassion, and intuition. What is the client trying to express? What's being said? What impact is the client having on you?

3. Trust the creative response to emerge

You don't need to work hard to find a clever response. Intuition, insight, and metaphor are not things to be figured out or solved with the mind. As a regular meditator, you awaken your inner creativity. Whatever the client needs to hear from you will emerge. You are a vessel for pure potential to manifest.

4. Speak from your intuition

The words will come. With your regular practices, you allow messages to come through you. Be open, detached from the outcome, and spontaneous right action will flow through you. And if no words come, perhaps the right action is to continue sitting in silence a bit longer.

A coach's truth often comes in the form of a question, reflection, an offering of perspective, or as a bold request of the client. Whatever comes, speak it with confidence and then let it rest in the silence.



Questions

Questioning & Soul Reflections

Questioning

The Purpose of Questioning

The purpose of powerful questions

Do you find yourself wondering how things work, or pondering the meaning or reasoning behind the way things are? If so, you're already thinking like a coach.

Powerful questions at the right time are the driver of both action and learning in a coaching session. They can point a client towards expanding awareness, fulfilling desires, aligning with their dharma, and exploring their unconscious.

Some questions, such as, "What's the next step?" can move the client forward, while other questions, such as, "What's the truth in this situation?" can take the client deeper.

The beginner's mindset

The most powerful questions are thought-provoking and open-ended, inviting introspection. Coaches need to ask questions from a place of exploration—the beginner's mindset. This is an attitude of openness and curiosity, without preconceived conclusions or expectations about how a client will respond.

Leading questions are a sneaky way of pretending to act as a coach when you're really acting as the expert in your client's life. Instead, questions should not try to steer a client towards any specific destination. In fact, when you ask the right questions, your client's answers may provide a refreshing surprise.

Types of powerful questions

Although powerful questions don't steer your client into a specific destination, they do help to lead your clients to a place of self-inquiry.

In meditation, we ask ourselves the four soul questions: "Who am I? What do I want? What am I grateful for? What is my purpose?"

In coaching, we point our clients toward the four cornerstones: Purpose, Meaning, Intention, and Shadow.

We do this by asking four types of questions:

1. Questions to align with dharma. These questions bring your client close to their **purpose**.
2. Questions to fulfill desires. These questions bring your client closer to their **intention**.

3. Questions to expand awareness. These questions bring your client closer to their *meaning*.
4. Questions to explore the subconscious. These questions help your client uncover their *shadow*.

Aligning with Dharma

To find alignment with dharma, clients need clear answers.

It's your job to ask, "What are you here to do?" and "What is your life's purpose?" These questions should be aimed at clarifying motivation, exploring what turns the client on, and discovering the impact they hope to have on the world.

By asking questions to help your client align with dharma, you help unlock their purpose.

Here are a few examples:

- What would you do if you had unlimited resources?
- Who do you feel most called to serve?
- What are your unique gifts?
- What's exciting you about this?
- What's most important to you?
- What's the impact you hope to make?

Fulfilling Desires

At the core of fulfilling a client's desire is the question, "What do you really want?"

Desire-fulfilling questions should be aimed at clarifying the client's intentions and goals, and exploring how to move them into action towards manifestation.

By asking questions to help your client fulfill their desires, you help unlock their intention.

Here are a few examples:

- When will you start?
- What's your game plan?
- What does success look like to you?
- What would you try now if you knew you couldn't fail?
- What do you want to create with your life?

Expanding Awareness

Questions to expand awareness bring your clients outside of themselves to take a look at the meta-view.

Only with a big-picture perspective can they interpret situations from a place of wisdom and understanding.

By asking questions to help your client expand their awareness, you unlock the meaning they're making of their lives.

Here are some examples:

- What does your wisest self say about this?
- How does this decision match up with who you know you are?
- What are the positive outcomes of this negative situation?
- In the bigger scheme of things, how important is this?
- How would your soul interpret these events?

Exploring the Subconscious

The difficult question at the heart of exploring the subconscious is, "What part of yourself is hidden and holding you back?"

This question is meant to clarify the client's repressed emotions, stress reactions, unhealthy habits, and limiting beliefs. It's best for coaches approach this inquiry with patience and compassion, offering ample space for the client's reflection.

By asking questions to help your client explore their subconscious, you help unlock their shadow.

Here are some examples:

- What emotions are not okay to feel?
- What don't you like about yourself?
- What are your greatest obstacles?
- How do you play small?
- What thoughts and emotions do you experience before giving into temptation?
- How do you distract yourself?

Peeling Back the Layers

Often a client's initial response to a question only scratches the surface of what's there.

It may require you to go several layers deeper to get to the heart of the matter. Sometimes repeating the same question a few times with only slight variation or different intonation can serve this purpose.

Here are some examples:

- What does that mean to you?
- Well, what does *that* mean to you?
- Can you tell me more?
- What else?
- What's under that?

Invite introspection

You know you've asked a powerful question when your client pauses and says, "That's a good question." They say that as a space-filler because they need a moment to process the bomb you've just dropped. They need to look someplace within themselves they've never looked before. As a result, they're finding answers to things they didn't even know that they didn't know. Not all coaching questions can be the big game-winner. Don't force it, but if you're feeling resonance with your client and listening deeply, you'll sense the opportunity—and the breakthrough question will emerge.

Yes or No?

Asking a Yes/No question is usually a dead-end in the coaching conversation. Instead, ask questions that elicit a reflective and meaningful response. For example, you could ask instead, "What did it take to get to your meditation this week?" "What did you find most useful?"

There are however times when a Yes/No question can be appropriate, such as gaining clarity or confirming a commitment. You might ask, "Did I hear you correctly that you're going to fast two days this month?"

To confirm a commitment you might ask, "Are you 100% willing to get up at 5:30 am every day this week?" In this case, the "Yes" is repeating a statement of intent and adds emphasis to the initial commitment.

The wisdom of why

Although why is the most basic expression of curiosity, it can cut to the heart of the matter and help a client to delve deep like no other question. When used mindfully, why can be asked as a follow-up to other powerful questions, encouraging your client to look deeper into their motivations and reasons behind their actions.

Asking why can also be a trap for the overly analytical client, sending them straight to their head, where they will make up stories and weave fantastic narratives. A coach will know the difference because a successful why question will produce insight while an unsuccessful why will yield rationalizations and excuses.

What's the right question?

Go with the flow.

Curiosity is a strong desire to know or understand something. It's the coach's superpower. The foundational attitude of curiosity is responsible for every great scientific discovery, technological invention, and creative work. It's also responsible for deep client breakthroughs.

Keep it simple.

There's no need to dazzle your client with a string of complex or creative questions. The best questions can be simple, to the point, and even sometimes cliché.

- What's the one thing you know you need to focus on this week?
- Tell me more.
- Then what?

As a coach, you'll approach your client with a natural curiosity about who they are at their core. What makes them tick? What's their kryptonite? What brings them to life and makes them shine? There's no right way to ask a curious question. You're doing it right if you approach every coaching session with qualia of, "Hmm, I wonder..."

Let them off the hot seat

Sometimes your questions may invite your client to look someplace they're not ready or willing to look. As a coach, you're always tracking your client's energy and the flow of the conversation.

They may become defensive or overwhelmed—or even shut down. If the client isn't ready to go there, continuing the line of questioning might feel more like the Inquisition than an invitation. As important as it is to know the right question, it's equally important to know when to back off.

In this case, a quick reflection with a Yes/No question may be easier for the client to respond to.



Reflections

Reflecting

Soul Reflections

Sometimes questions aren't enough.

There are times when the simple question is all that's required to nudge your client forward, but there are other times when a little more context or understanding is needed. As a coach, you're listening for themes in the client's life that emerge—sometimes over several sessions.

Be aware of your own lens

How do you know that what you're seeing in your client is truly a reflection of their soul versus a projection of your own subconscious hopes, agendas, fears, and limitations onto your client? Chances are you will have some distortion in your reflections as a new coach. But that's okay—you don't have to be perfect. As long as you continue to practice cleaning your mirror so the client's reflection becomes clearer and truer over time, you'll be an effective coach.

Everyone has their own perspective. Our lens has been conditioned our entire lives by every encounter we've ever had. Everything we've ever learned. All the beliefs we've formed around who we are and the way the world works.

This is why 10 people could listen to one person give the same speech and have 10 different perspectives.

Our subconscious beliefs, opinions, and preferences are projected onto the person. Everyone has their own lens—and it's not right or wrong—it's simply something you need to be aware of to reduce your own implicit biases. If you don't, you'll never know if you're truly reflecting your client or just seeing yourself projected onto them.

To become an effective mirror for your client, you'll need to expand your awareness beyond the lens to include the lens.

By doing this, your lens shift from subject to object. Rather than seeing through your lens, you can actually look directly at your lens. You can begin to see and self-manage your lens of limiting beliefs as objects in awareness and therefore don't remain limited or biased by them.

- Who in your life do you feel you see clearly?
- Who in your life do you project your own hopes and fears onto?
- How are these two relationships different?

You're more than a mirror

Soul reflections don't just parrot or repeat back what your client has said. They go beyond that superficial layer to get to the underlying humanity of not only the words spoken, but the theme carried through.

A coach's job is to be more than a mirror for the client. You provide a deeper look into their ongoing actions and beliefs that may be keeping them where they are and preventing them from getting to where they want to be.

What are the most impactful types of soul reflections?

1. Paraphrase or simplify
2. Offer perspective
3. Share the impact
4. Offer acknowledgement
5. Show empathy
6. Offer a metaphor

Paraphrase or simplify

The coaching conversation has clients playing at the very edge of their own understanding and often figuring things out verbally as they go. Because of this, their answers to questions and the stories they tell can ramble, sound fragmented, and be filled with what seem to be nonsequiturs. From their deep listening, coaches can extract main points and primary emotions and even weave them into bigger goals or themes to create a more coherent narrative for clients.

This kind of reflection is a succinct summary of what a coach hears a client trying to communicate.

Offer perspective

Once a coach has intuitively listened to a client's story, the coach can provide a reflection to the client of their understanding of the situation with a clear and nuanced interpretation. This can be a crucial part of coaching as the coach's perspective can shed new light on the story the client is telling about their goals, motivations, and limitations.

In this form of reflection, the coach articulates the truth as they observe it from their perspective and level of awareness. Since the coach's perspective is just one of infinite perspectives, it is humbly shared with a non-attachment and is often followed up with another question to check in and see how their reflection landed for the client.

Share the impact

You'll likely experience situations where your client's story moves you in a profound way. You'll want to reflect this impact back to your client. Sometimes a coach can feel the emotion behind a client's situation with greater clarity and depth than the client can feel for themselves. When this reflection is offered by the coach, it can give the client permission to feel more deeply themselves.

Sharing impact is different from sharing perspective. A coach's perspective on a client's situation comes from wisdom, whereas sharing impact comes from the empathetic heart. But like the perspective, this reflection should be offered with non-attachment and follow-up to check for how the coach's sharing landed with the client.

Offer acknowledgment

Part of being a coach is also being a client's greatest fan and cheerleader. When the time is right, an acknowledgment from the coach can reinforce positive behavior, generate momentum, and help a client to see their own greatness.

A skillful acknowledgment goes beyond complimenting a client on what they did well to also point out who they are being that is working well. This may look like pointing out a specific strength or aptitude in the moment as a coach sees it come up.

Show Empathy

The coaching conversation has clients playing at the very edge of their own understanding and often figuring things out verbally as they go. Because of this, their answers to questions and the stories they tell can ramble, sound fragmented, and be filled with what seem to be nonsequiturs. From their deep listening, coaches can extract main points and primary emotions and even weave them into bigger goals or themes to create a more coherent narrative for clients.

This kind of reflection is a succinct summary of what a coach hears a client trying to communicate.

Offer a metaphor

Metaphors can be shortcuts to the subconscious—a way of bypassing a client's intellect and rational mind and speaking directly to their soul.

Metaphors are used to illustrate a point or paint a verbal picture for the client and may be the most complex and advanced form of a coach's reflection. A good metaphor isn't something that should be figured out but instead spontaneously arises out of a coach's deep, intuitive listening. A coach sees the metaphor in their mind's eye and shares it with a client without attachment.

Sometimes a client will offer a metaphor and a coach can elaborate on it.

Be aware of transference

Consider your client's lens.

As a coach, you've evolved your awareness beyond the lens to include the lens.

You're aware of your own frame of reference and the impact that might make on your perception of the client. Throughout your coaching education, you'll develop the experience to recognize this and work with it.

But your client hasn't had the same training or experience.

While entering into your coaching relationship, there's a possibility your client will project their subconscious beliefs and expectations onto you. This is called transference. The term originates from Psychodynamic Therapy and refers to when your client transfers feelings and attitudes from a past experience onto you in the

present. This process is likely to be—at least to some degree—inappropriate and when left unchecked can be damaging to the coach-client relationship.

Unconditional positive regard

Most people have never had someone in their life fully listen to them, understand them deeply, and accept them exactly as they are. As you show up with this presence of unconditional positive regard for your client, it can cause all kinds of emotional confusion and misunderstanding. It's not uncommon for a client to develop a little crush on their coach, or to place them on a high pedestal.

It's also not uncommon for a client to project their worst onto the coach. As a fallible human, you might happen to show up a few minutes late to a coaching session. All of a sudden, your client doesn't share as openly as they did in the last session, and they start to tense up.

You may have unintentionally triggered a subconscious fear of abandonment your client developed as a child. Now, they see you as a bad coach who doesn't really care about them. They react the way they've been conditioned to—by shutting you out.

Being more than a mirror for your client means practicing equanimity.

If your ego gets inflated on the pedestal of the good coach, notice it, manage it, and move on. If your ego gets bruised by being the bad coach, notice it, manage it, and move on.

A clear mirror isn't moved by praise or blame but instead stays in open awareness and ready to respond to whatever the client needs. When seen clearly, the client's transference can be profound coach-able moments.

Be willing to be wrong

The client is the expert of their own path.

It's not your job to always be right about the client. The client knows their own truth. Your job is to give them something to respond to. By being humble and letting go of the ego—which wants to be right—the coach is still moving the conversation forward.



PART 1

Coaching Purpose

Coaching Purpose

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**Do you know your
purpose?**

Do you know your purpose?

What's your purpose?

You may quickly jump to your career, your family, or something else you've already established. While this isn't necessarily incorrect, think deeper. Do you have another purpose—something you've always felt a deep desire to fulfill?

Discovering your own purpose—your *dharma*—empowers you to lead coaching clients down their own path of self-discovery.

Dharma is a Sanskrit word with many meanings. As coaches, we'll define it this way:

Dharma is the duty—or purpose—each of us is naturally meant to contribute to the world around us. It's path of self-awareness that leads to who we truly are.

Dharma is our big “why.” *It's how we use our unique talents and passions to serve the world.*

The benefits of living in alignment with dharma

- You experience increased self-fulfillment
- Your actions align with your values
- Your immediate relationships align with your values
- People in your life can experience positive impacts
- Ripple effects carry positive impacts to larger communities

There are two types of purpose.

1. The first is our inner purpose—our “capital D” Dharma.

Our inner purpose is always the same: to awaken to who we truly are as conscious presence. *Your inner purpose is similar to the experience of The Gap in meditation. It's a purpose you can't lose; it's always already there.*

2. The other is our outer purpose—our “little d” dharma.

Our outer purpose entails uncovering our unique gifts, then using them to serve others and ourselves. It continuously changes as we do—it's embodied by our presence and actions. *Your outer purpose can evolve and change over time. It's something to be discovered, clarified, and cultivated.*

Our inner purpose is often more difficult to discern, but both types of purpose are important. **The more you know about your inner purpose, the clearer your outer purpose can become.**



Discover your purpose

Discover Your Purpose

What is an archetype?

Archetype (noun) is a recurring idea, symbol, pattern, or character-type, in a story.

Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, defined archetypes as universal, symbolic characters that reside within the collective unconscious of human beings.

They are perennial themes, ideals, or behavioral patterns replicated over time within all cultures. They represent our collective soul's imagination, yearnings, and desires.

Archetypes have always existed. They can be found in art, mythology, movies, sports, and literature. They remain consistent through time and place, but the form they take shifts.

Hundreds of years ago, the most common archetypes included the hero, the caregiver, the mother, the orphan, the rebel, and the sage. Today, archetypes are visible in the larger-than-life heroes depicted in popular culture.

Sometimes it's easiest to find your purpose in the actions of others.

In Enrichment, you learned that one way to bring the subconscious to the conscious level is to notice what we project onto others. In this way, archetypes can reveal your inner self—your true nature.

We're hardwired at the soul level to act out certain archetypal characteristics. The archetypes you're attuned to—the ones which resonate with you—are your personal archetypes.

"Every human is attuned to certain archetypes, and those that attract you often have qualities that speak to your inner purpose."

A projected archetype isn't defined by any specific characteristics—it can be anyone with traits you admire, or which you would like more of in your life. One archetype can resonate with multiple people for different reasons.

Every archetype has some strength, energy, or quality of being that is admirable or inspiring.

This is its "special power"—what makes it resonate powerfully with someone.

Projected archetypes are appealing because of the impact they have on others and the world. By putting their special powers to good use, an archetype creates a legacy—a special kind of greatness that resonates with your subconscious purpose.

Meanwhile, someone who feels a pull toward activism might find inspiration in archetypes associated with social reform—such as feminist leader Gloria Steinem or human rights advocate Malala Yousafzi.

Everyday people can be archetypes, too. For example, you might admire your hairstylist’s charisma, your accountant’s attention to detail, or the free spirit of the backpacker you met on the train.

“Examining your projected archetypes can grant insight into how you’d like to serve the world.”

By identifying and examining your projected archetypes, you can clarify your own values, special powers, and legacy.

You can use this knowledge to craft a **purpose statement**—a pithy but powerful summation of your dharma.

Once you’ve crafted your purpose statement, it can serve as a sort of mantra—something to guide your choices and lend you courage in difficult times.

How do I craft my statement?

First, we’ll brainstorm people you admire—narrowing them down to the projected archetype that speaks to you most powerfully. We’ll clarify their name and special powers. Then, we’ll explore the impact you want to make in the world.

Finally, we’ll plug your responses into a purpose statement using this formula:

*I am the [archetype name]
who uses [special power]
to [legacy impact]*

Part 1: Admire and be inspired

Admire and be inspired—who speaks to your soul?

Instructions:

Using **Page 1** of your *Discover Your Purpose* worksheet or a piece of paper, brainstorm 3 to 15 names of people you admire.

Don't feel intimidated by these people, compare yourself to them, or place them on a pedestal. **Remember, even the most accomplished, well-loved people are still human.**

Part 2: Feel the connection

Feel any kindred spirits?

Instructions:

Using **Page 2** of your *Discover Your Purpose* worksheet, choose three people from your list—the ones with whom you feel the strongest connection.

Write their names on your worksheet under **My top three**.

Part 3: Examine their essence

Look beyond their names—into their essence.

Instructions:

Using **Page 3** of your *Discover Your Purpose* worksheet, write down titles for your top three, or words that describe each person.

Don't feel limited by prefab titles—if you want, get creative and make up your own. Remember, **we're not talking about the titles you'd see on this person's business card**. Write what **you** see them as. Challenge yourself to go deeper. Try thinking beyond the titles anyone could claim.

Part 4: Identify their special powers

Spot their special powers.

Instructions:

Still on **Page 3** of your *Discover Your Purpose* worksheet, write the unique qualities or "special powers" each person possesses from your point of view.

Again, challenge yourself to go deeper—find the actions and qualities most specific to them.

Ask yourself...

- Do any of these special powers resonate with who I am?
- How am I already using these special powers?
- What would it look like if I amplified my special powers by 10?

Part 5: Define their legacy

Define their legacy.

Instructions:

Flip to **Page 4** of your *Discover Your Purpose* worksheet. Ask yourself these questions about each person on your list:

- What impact have they had on others?
- What impact have they had on the world?
- What would be missing if they weren't here?

Then, write down what comes to mind for each of them.

- **Ask yourself...**
What legacy do I want to leave behind?
- What impact do I want to make on an individual, a community, or the world?

Part 6: Try it on

Try it on.

Instructions:

Your purpose is waiting to be extracted—so let intuition guide you.

Flip to **Page 5** of your worksheet. Turn your attention toward the descriptors you listed, not the people you chose. Detach yourself from their names.

First, focus on the titles.

- Look at everything you've written in this column, regardless of the name it's next to.
- Review the titles in relation to yourself. Which ones resonate with who you are in your core?
- Create one title to give yourself. **Write it in box 1.**

Take as much time as you need—feel free to return to this step at any point to refine your title.

Once you feel satisfied with your title, take a deep breath, sit with it, then move on to the next step.

Next, do the same with special powers.

- Look at everything you've written in this column, regardless of the name it's next to.
- Which special powers resonate with who you are in your core?
- Think about one power you have inside you—even if you're not currently expressing it outwardly. **Write it in box 2.**

Take as much time as you need—feel free to return to this step at any point to refine your power.

Finally, examine the impacts.

- Look at everything you've written in this column, regardless of the name it's next to.
- Which impacts resonate most deeply with you?
- If none of these impacts resonate with you fully or you're feeling stuck in the process you might also try asking yourself...":
 - Who am I already serving? What would it look like if I amplified that service by 10?
 - If I had \$1 million to donate to one cause, what would it be? Why?
 - What injustice would I most like to solve in today's world?
 - What stories do I want people to tell about me on my 100th birthday?
- Get creative. **In box 3, write a statement about the impact you would like to have.**

If you're feeling stuck, reach out to your peers in the **cohort group forums**, or ask about it during your **mentor coach meeting**.

Part 7: Create your statement

Reveal your purpose statement.

Instructions:

Flip to **Page 6** of your **Discover Your Purpose** worksheet. The title, power, and impact you chose from page 5 should be filled in for you. Try on the statement—how does it feel?

- You might need to adjust the language slightly to make it flow.
- Maybe you're thinking, "I could do more with this." If that's the case, revisit the activity and refine your statement.
- Maybe your statement feels like a part of yourself you always knew was there, but were never able to put into words. You never had time to acknowledge it.
- Sit with your statement for a few moments repeating it to yourself silently like your mantra. Then speak it out loud and feel it in your heart. **If it's resonating with you, then get ready to act on it!**



Purpose - Structured

Purpose – Structured

The Coaching Methodologies

Chopra Coaching is centered around two coaching methodologies.

Think of the four cornerstones of the Chopra Coaching Model as the end goal—the light at the end of the coaching tunnel. To get from where they are to where they want to be, your clients must discover their purpose, act with intention, create positive meaning, and integrate their shadow.

The journey to uncovering these cornerstones can take you, your clients, and even your mentors in many different directions. That's why you'll learn to access them in both structured and improvised (improv) ways.

But what are these two coaching methods, when should you use them, and how do they overlap?

Structured and improv

- **Structured coaching** usually starts with context, naming the concepts to be taught and explaining the science and background before them. Then, the coach guides the client through a specific set of steps, often consulting a script or following a worksheet to keep themselves and the client on track.
- **Improv coaching** is more freeform and spontaneous. When improvising, coaches primarily focus on using the Enrichment core skills of listening, questions, and reflections based on the cornerstone being covered and what the client needs in the present moment. Often, improv coaching occurs in response to specific, immediate challenges or opportunities a client is facing.

There are risks and benefits to each method.

Generally, a tighter structure leads to greater control and lower risk. More improvisational coaching, meanwhile, offers greater room for creativity, spontaneity, and personalization—but requires more skill.

As a new coach, you may rely heavily on step-by-step worksheets and exercises at first. But as you gain comfort and familiarity with the coaching role and methodology, you'll find yourself improvising more and more.

Although distinctions exist between structured and improv coaching, the lines aren't really that neat. There's plenty of room to improvise while guiding structured exercises, and improv sessions can have guardrails too.

Eventually, you'll learn to move between them both—easily and effortlessly.

A structured session can be planned ahead of time. For example, it's common to guide the client through the purpose and intention exercises at the beginning of a new coaching relationship. Both of these processes will set the trajectory for your client's success—right off the bat.

But a client's responses can't always be predicted. You'll need your fundamental coaching skills to help them deepen their understanding of certain areas. Throughout the process, you'll ask questions and offer reflections to help them gain clarity, insight, and motivation.

Improv coaching skills will also help you modify the exercise structure as needed. You'll guide your client using your interpretation and personalization of the script.

Improv sessions may happen between the structured ones, or after all four cornerstones have been addressed in a structured way. In an improv session, you don't set an agenda—you just show up, ready to meet the client wherever they are and go wherever they want to go.

You'll learn more about improv coaching next week. For now, we'll explore structured purpose coaching.

Teaching Purpose Coaching Concepts

What to teach

To complete the archetype exercise and craft their purpose statement, your client will need to understand three key concepts. You learned these when you experienced the exercises *as a client*, and now you'll learn to teach them *to your client*.

1. Purpose or dharma
2. Archetypes
3. Legacy and impact

Purpose or dharma

You'll remember from last week that we're coaching our clients to find two types of purpose. The first is their inner purpose, which is always the same: to awaken to who they truly are—pure awareness. Awakening to their true nature is their "capital D" Dharma—it already exists and can never be lost.

Outer purpose, on the other hand, is their "little d" dharma. It involves uncovering their unique gifts, then using them to serve. Outer purpose can change over time. It's something to be discovered, clarified, and cultivated.

The more a client knows about their inner purpose, the clearer their outer purpose can become.

Archetypes

As you'll remember, archetypes are universal, symbolic characters that reside within the collective unconscious of human beings.

Archetypes have always existed, replicated over time within all cultures. They remain consistent through time and place, but their form may shift.

It's likely that more than one archetype will resonate with your client. Once you've coached them to discover their archetypes, you can help them clarify their purpose, use their special powers, make wise choices, and avoid pitfalls.

Legacy, global impact, and social impact

As you know, legacy refers to a special kind of greatness that resonates with your subconscious purpose. When an archetype puts their strengths—their special powers—to good use, they create a legacy.

As a Chopra Coach, you'll help clients explore two elements of legacy: global impact and social impact. Each impact answers a different question:

1. **Global impact:** What difference do I feel called to make in the world?
2. **Social impact:** What people, beings, or communities do I feel compelled to serve?

Why teach?

You'll switch roles between coach and teacher throughout your coaching career.

Teaching the coaching concepts will help you...

Provide context

When clients know the background of a concept, they more easily see its immediate relevance. This helps them understand how the concept fits into their own lives. They can then apply it appropriately to their choices and actions.

Overcome skepticism

Explicit instruction on coaching concepts, their origins, and the research behind them can push clients past hesitation and hang-ups. Then, they can stop asking the wrong questions—and start asking the right ones.

Frame a question

When clients already grasp the concept behind an inquiry, they better understand its value. This helps them ponder questions more deeply and offer more authentic responses.

Name the terrain

Naming coaching concepts will make it easier to understand what they are, how they're connected, and how they're applied. Similarly, naming a challenge can make it seem less scary—helping clients feel less overwhelmed and more empowered.

How to teach

Keep it simple.

It can be tempting to dive deep into the research and theory behind these coaching concepts—but try to keep the conversation simple.

Your client only needs to know the basics of these concepts to benefit from them. If you give them too much information at once, they may experience cognitive overload or feel overwhelmed.

The best way to know how much teaching to offer is to first ask your client what they already know.

If they're already fluent in Chopra concepts and have done other personal development work, they may not need further instruction on these concepts. And if they're brand new to this kind of work, five minutes is usually enough time to get the major points across.

"After 5 minutes, you can always ask them again, "Would it be helpful for me to go on, or do you get the gist?"

Teach just enough to overcome skepticism, build buy-in, and increase motivation for the upcoming exercise or conversation.



Clarifying Special Powers

Clarifying Special Powers

What do we mean by special powers?

We're not trying to uncover some hidden ability to fly, see through walls, or turn invisible. We're talking about a different kind of special power. And for your client to discover theirs, they'll first need to examine how they define strength.

The Center for Applied Positive Psychology defines strengths as "our pre-existing patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that are authentic, [that are] energizing, and which lead to our best performance."

In this context, **authentic** means the strength resonates from the true self—as opposed to acquired skills or learned behaviors that don't stimulate a sense of joy. **Energizing** means using the strength cultivates feelings of excitement and a positive attitude toward life.

Strengths may be derived from the natural skills or talents associated with a person's *prakruti*, but not necessarily—they may defy the doshas and just feel good to use.

Special powers are one type of strength. They're the qualities or talents that energize your client. They're essential to your client's journey toward living their dharma.

Special powers are essential to identify when pursuing Purpose.

Once your client has identified their special powers, they may find themselves performing better in work, relationships, and life. Using their special powers may generate feelings of autonomy, competence, confidence, and self-esteem. It might also encourage the experience of flow, or being in the zone.

By using their special powers, clients can do what they naturally do best—instead of struggling against the currents of their natural capacities. This will enhance their overall well-being.

Clarifying special powers

Take a moment to reflect on what you learned in Chopra Coaching Enrichment.

Powerful questioning is a fundamental skill to help your client uncover their special powers.

What are some questions to ask?

- What are your unique talents and gifts?
- What qualities do you like most about yourself?
- What are you naturally good at?
- How would a good friend describe you at your best?

There is always room for improv within structure. When appropriate, use your intuition and creativity to craft questions in the moment with clients. The questions above are only a guide.

After your client has answered a few questions, have them write down their top 3-5 special powers. If they have trouble identifying any, have them ask friends or family members for help.

Focus on building strengths—not improving weaknesses.

Many believe we must improve perceived weaknesses to achieve our goals, but the path to fulfillment lies in capitalizing on our strengths—our special powers. Truly understanding this concept can lead to a profound shift in self-perception, self-acceptance, and self-awareness.

If your client's special powers align with their *prakruti*, this could be a good teaching moment. It's an opportunity to explain how they can capitalize on the qualities and strengths associated with their doshic nature.

Once people really understand their nature, they begin to more openly accept and honor it.



Clarifying Legacy

Clarifying Legacy

What's a legacy?

There's a fundamental human need to believe our life has made an impact.

We all hope we'll be remembered someday for who we were—or something we accomplished in our lifetime. Yet the topic of legacy rarely comes up until retirement age. This is when many people begin reflecting on their lives, asking themselves what they've done that has mattered.

Toward the end of life, people tend to reflect on how they'll be memorialized. They might ask themselves, "What have I contributed to future generations?"

But no matter what phase of life we are in, we have each already started leaving our legacy.

There are a few ways you can help uncover a client's sense of legacy.

You might have them imagine themselves in the future looking backward. Ask them, "if you live to be 100, what legacy do you hope to have built by then?"

Of course, your clients don't have to wait until retirement or imagine they're 100 to reflect on their legacy. You might ask them, "What purposeful contribution have you made up to this point?" or, "If you died tomorrow, what would you be remembered for?"

You might even go so far as to have them write their own obituary.

As you discuss this topic with your clients, remember what you learned in Lesson 2—legacy includes both **global** and **social** impacts.

Global impact is the difference we feel called to make in the world.

Below, you'll uncover a few powerful questions that can help you get to the heart of a client's desired global impact—but the process isn't always so straightforward.

If your client has never thought about their legacy before, you may need to inquire about it in several different ways. Practice the skills you learned in Chopra Coaching Enrichment. Layer questions to take the client deeper, then rest patiently—giving them space to process.

Legacy and global impact may also emerge naturally as you move through other sessions with your client.

What are some layer questions to ask?

- If you had a million dollars to donate to one cause, what would it be? Why?
- What difference do you feel called to make in the world?
- What form of injustice do you feel called to address?
- What news stories do you continue thinking about long after the headlines change?
- What do you hope people remember about you 30 years after your death?

There's no need to push your client with these questions. They may not be able to get there quite yet, and that's OK.

Even by just introducing the concept, you've set your client's subconscious mind in motion.

A guided meditation may help.

Depending on your own preference and intuition, you may choose to guide a visualization to help your client get in touch with the difference they want to make in the world.

Follow these steps:

1. Begin with a brief guided meditation on body and breath.
2. Next, lead your client through the following scenarios:
 - a. Imagine yourself at 80, sitting by a campfire. What are you wearing? What's your posture like? What kind of night is it?
 - b. Now imagine you're surrounded by schoolchildren, who are listening intently for a story. What wisdom would you like to pass on to them?
3. Give your client a few moments to experience the visualization before processing their experience.

After completing the guided meditation, they may want to take a few notes on what they've experienced and learned.

The weight of global impact can feel like a burden to some clients.

The earth is an enormous globe—home to 7.5 billion people in nearly 200 countries. If your client's energy shifts from passion to overwhelm, they may truly be feeling the weight of the world upon them.

It may trigger your client's inner voice to ask: "Who are you to make a difference in the world?"

This inner critical voice is predictable. Its job is to protect the ego from getting hurt or looking bad. Committing to one's purpose seems risky to the ego, so it shields itself with criticism until your client goes back to playing safe and small.

- If you notice your client reacting to the concept of their global impact in this way, you can:
- Inquire into the thoughts that have led to these feelings.
- Teach them about karma. Explain that even tiny acts of purpose have a ripple effect across the globe.
- Ask them to reflect on the impact they're already making.
- Encourage them to focus first on their immediate community—rather than thinking they need to cure all diseases, end all war, or solve world hunger today.



The Social Impact

The Social Impact

Positively impacting others is an essential element of Purpose.

Our social impact is how we use our unique talents and special powers to serve others and ourselves.

Seva is a Sanskrit word meaning selfless service—work performed with an attitude of generosity without any thought of reward, acknowledgment, or reciprocation. In ancient India, it was believed that those who practiced Seva would grow spiritually while also benefitting their community.

Most of your clients will have experienced a natural desire to serve their families and friends. They may have also committed to serving their colleagues, teammates, or employees in different ways.

Your role as a coach is to help your clients shift from viewing service as an obligation to viewing it as a privilege—and expanding the scope of who they want to serve.

It's said that as our consciousness evolves, we move from an egocentric stage of development to an ethnocentric and then a world-centric one. The archetype exercise you'll learn to facilitate can expedite this process.

Even if your client seems like they have it all, they may still be missing something.

Many high achievers have accumulated wealth, crossed off career goals, and achieved their desired lifestyle. They're aware that an excess of money doesn't buy happiness, and they try their best to act accordingly. Still, living life on their own terms isn't quite enough.

It's impossible to be content without the sense of purpose that only comes from serving others. When a client is missing this essential feeling, coaching around service can be the antidote.

You may consider inquiring into your client's relationship to social service if they:

- Complain about being unhappy, despite an outward measure of success.
- Express feelings of being disconnected or alone, despite being surrounded by others.
- Seem hyper-focused on themselves and their own achievements.
- Appear overly competitive or driven to get ahead of others.

What are some questions to ask?

- Who do you want to serve?
- Who do you already serve?
- If you could give a million dollars to any one group of people, who would it be?
- Around what person or group of people do you feel most natural?
- What kind of people naturally inspire your empathy or compassion?
- What kinds of people haven't yet overcome a struggle or challenge you've overcome?

There is always room for improv within structure. When appropriate, use your intuition and creativity to craft questions in the moment with clients. The questions above are only a guide.

What happens when it's just too much?

If you've ever flown on a plane, a flight attendant has likely instructed you to put your own oxygen mask on first before helping others in the event of an emergency. After all, if you pass out, you can't help anyone.

In the context of social impact, over-serving probably won't deprive your clients of oxygen. Still, they may find themselves running low on energy and inspiration.

This is a type of burnout called compassion fatigue or empathy fatigue. It is common in people who are exposed regularly, or for a prolonged period of time, to the suffering of others.

If your client is a health care worker, public safety official, elder caregiver, or special needs parent, they may be especially at risk—but even clients without such responsibilities can experience this type of burnout, too.

You'll also want to watch out for clients experiencing existential angst—a feeling of anxiety and overwhelm around the state of the world. These clients are usually highly empathic. They're acutely conscious of societal needs but feel helpless to meet them.

Although these clients may already be actively engaged in charity and volunteering, they may feel unable to commit any more energy, time, or money to the plights of others. They may feel paralyzed and overwhelmed by the enormous and unending nature of the world's challenges.

Help your client build a buffer against burnout.

In cases of empathy fatigue or existential angst, it may be unhealthy for your client to take on more selfless service. Instead, try helping them develop healthier boundaries or better self-care practices.

- Ask them what initially called them to the service they're doing. Inquire about how they might reconnect with that purpose.
- Ask them which parts of their service align with purpose and which parts don't.
- Invite them to consider a more manageable rhythm and more sustainable actions. Help them set new intentions to outsource, delegate, reorganize, or just say no.
- Encourage them to reflect on what it would look like if they served themselves the same way they do others.

As a coach, you're also especially vulnerable to empathy fatigue—so it's important to walk the talk.

Check in regularly with your own energy for service. If you start feeling resentful before sessions or drained (rather than energized) after them, you probably need to set more boundaries or commit to better self-care.



The Archetypes



Absolute Purpose

Explaining Archetypes

Trying another archetype

On a macro level, you examined their enduring role in human history and popular culture. You also learned how, at the individual level, they can make the subconscious conscious.

When introducing projected archetypes to your client, emphasize that the archetype serves as a mirror. The point of the exercise is to clarify their own values, special powers, and legacy. It's about becoming more like themselves—not mimicking someone else.

Go beyond the stars.

Historically, the most common archetypes included characters like the hero, the caregiver, the mother, the orphan, the rebel, and the sage. But today, archetypes are visible in the larger-than-life heroes depicted in popular culture. Many people look to celebrities, politicians, influencers, or even fictional characters—then try to model their lives after them.

You can absolutely introduce a client to archetypes using famous pop stars or historical figures they find inspiring. But you may also want to mention some broader archetypes that leave the exercise open to greater interpretation.

The Archetypes

Some archetypes align with the natural skills and abilities of specific dosha constitutions. If your client is getting stuck coming up with their own archetypes, you might start by offering something that speaks to their prakruti.

The Artist

Commonly associated with Vata types, Artists exemplify the capacity for creativity and expansiveness. They are the dreamers, the free spirits, the original thinkers, and the adventurous souls. Always full of surprises, the Artist is perpetually engaged in some creative pursuit, feeling empty and lacking in purpose when they are not. Highly imaginative and always growth-oriented, they refuse to settle for the status quo—forever asking what they can do right now to make things better.

The Conjurer

Commonly associated with Vata-Pitta types, Conjurers exemplify the capacity for creative innovation. They're fueled not just by an impulse toward new ideas, fresh experiences, and uncharted territory—but by an absolute need for these things. Conjurers are driven by what most ignites their inner enthusiasm. Characterized by their unique combination of creativity and ambition, these types are exceptionally capable of dreaming up beautiful and pioneering visions—then making them a reality.

The Companion

Commonly associated with Vata-Kapha types, Companions want nothing more than to do good in the world—and to have fun while they're at it. Altruistic, compassionate, and funny, these types are eager to help, quick to forgive, and always up for a laugh. Characterized by their rare combination of mental creativity, emotional friendliness, and physical stability, balanced Companions have a rare ability to be lighthearted yet grounded.

The Advocate

Commonly associated with Vata-Kapha types, Companions want nothing more than to do good in the world—and to have fun while they're at it. Altruistic, compassionate, and funny, these types are eager to help, quick to forgive, and always up for a laugh. Characterized by their rare combination of mental creativity, emotional friendliness, and physical stability, balanced Companions have a rare ability to be lighthearted yet grounded.

The Achiever

Commonly associated with Pitta types, Achievers exemplify the capacity for single minded focus and extraordinary determination. Ambitious, passionate, and hardworking, they excel at setting big goals and know how to get things done. Characterized by their unique combination of mental tenacity and physical strength, Achievers are often a force to be reckoned with. They are natural-born leaders, with the confidence to go after what they want and the charisma to galvanize others to join in the effort.

The Director

Commonly associated with Pitta-Kapha types, Directors exemplify the capacity for benevolent leadership. Passionate, caring, and charismatic, these are the individuals who inspire us to be better and show us just how much we are capable of. Characterized by their unique combination of ambition and stamina, Director types have the courage to stand up for what they believe in and the perseverance to bring about real change.

The Mapmaker

Commonly associated with Kapha-Vata types, Mapmakers exemplify the ability to humbly inspire. Always leading with the heart, they perpetually seek out the good in every person and situation, searching for ways to make things better. Characterized by their rare combination of emotional warmth, mental stamina, and physical energy, Mapmakers are uniquely able not only to dream up beautiful visions, but to bring them to life as well.

The Protector

Commonly associated with Kapha-Pitta types, Protectors exemplify the capacity for compassion and courage. Grounded and steady personalities who always lead with the heart, Protectors are defined by their often surprising combination of emotional warmth and formidable physical strength. As gentle souls who believe in the inherent goodness of all beings, these individuals are unfailingly consistent in their ability to come to the aid of those in need.

The Nurturer

Commonly associated with Kapha types, Nurturers exemplify the capacity for loving kindness. These deeply compassionate individuals cultivate a sense of calm, harmony, and easygoing acceptance wherever they go. Characterized by their unique combination of emotional stability, mental stamina, and physical endurance, Nurturers are steadfast in their willingness to provide comfort to those who need it most.

Just because an archetype aligns with a person's prakruti **does not** necessarily mean it's the archetype they most relate to or want to embody.

Think of these nine archetypes as **conversation starters** to use when a client feels stuck—not as a fate they're destined to fulfill.

Introducing the formula

Once your client has a firm grasp on archetypes, special powers, and legacy, you'll introduce them to the purpose statement formula:

*I am the [archetype name]
who uses [special power]
to [legacy impact].*

You might offer purpose statement examples based on the archetypes you've already discussed.

Beware to compare.

It's one thing to identify the Dalai Lama as a projected archetype to help your client clarify their subconscious purpose. It's quite another to set the bar at Dalai Lama status and have them compare themselves directly to His Holiness.

Clients may misinterpret this exercise, thinking they're supposed to become just like the person they admire. This may make them feel overwhelmed instead of inspired.

Clarify that their projected archetype should get at the essence of who they truly are—not pressure them to be like someone else.

“Finding your purpose is like the mythological hero's inner journey—leaving the comfort of the known to explore the unknown. Challenges are guaranteed, but we'll gain wisdom along the way.” -Pete Kirchmer

Facilitating the Archetype Exercise

Walking your client through the worksheet

Walk your client through the worksheet.

You've discussed purpose, special powers, legacy, and archetypes with your client—keeping it simple, but going into detail when needed. Now, it's time to walk them through the same worksheet you experienced as a client, and uncover their purpose statement.

Offer instructions for each step of the worksheet. For your first coaching session, you may want to use them as a script—or you can modify the instructions as needed.

Let intuition and your client's needs guide you.

Step by step

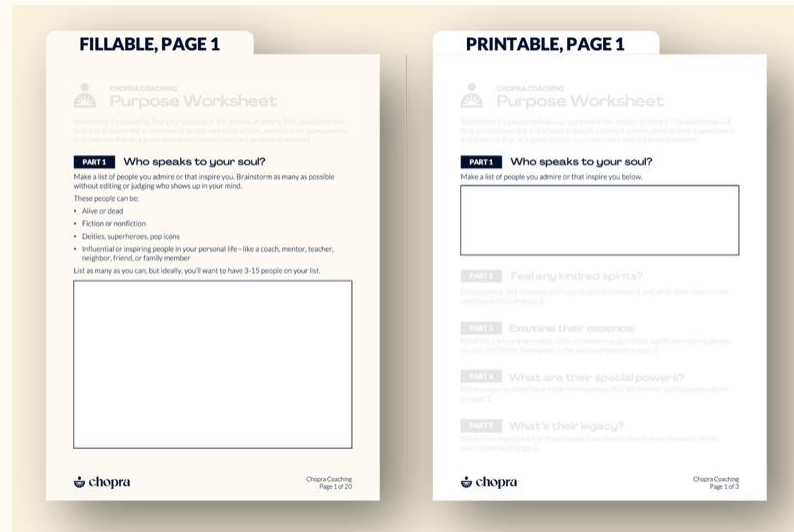
Use or modify these instructions to guide your client through the purpose statement exercise.

There are two versions of the Purpose Worksheet—one fillable, and one printable.

1. **Fillable:** The fillable version works best in a digital environment—if you'll be coaching your client through the worksheet through a video call. Full written instructions are provided on the page, so your client can read along as you guide them through the worksheet.
2. **Printable:** The printable version works best in a live environment, where you're sitting with your client in person. Written instructions have been paired down to allow for a more conversational approach to the worksheet. Rather than focusing on the page, the focus is the conversation between you and your client.

That said, you're welcome to use either worksheet for either purpose depending on your client's needs.

Part 1:



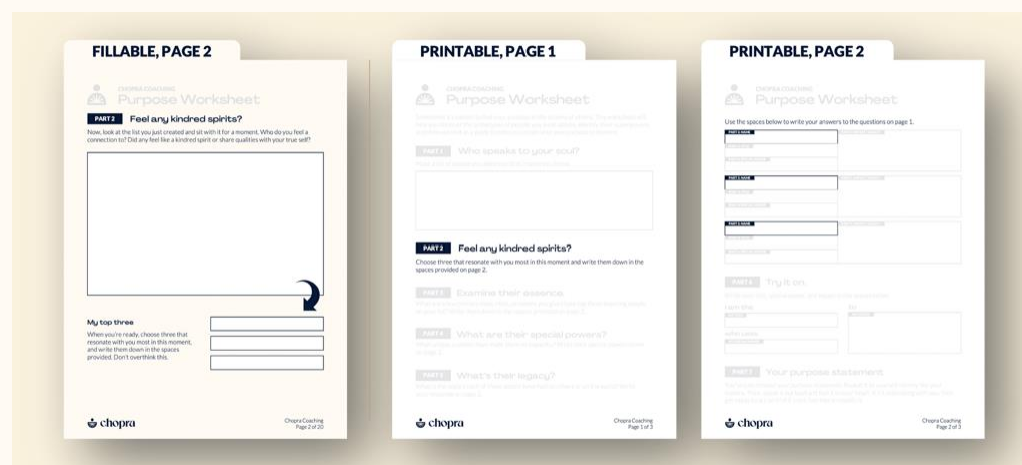
Make a list of people you admire. Brainstorm as many as possible without editing or judging who shows up in your mind.

These people can be:

- Alive or dead.
- Fictional or real.
- Deities, superheroes, or pop icons.
- Influential or inspiring people in your personal life—like a coach, mentor, teacher, neighbor, friend, or family member.

List as many as you can, but ideally you'll want to have 3-15 people on your list.

Part 2:



Look at the list you just created. Sit with it for a moment. Who do you feel a connection to? Does anyone feel like a kindred spirit or seem to share qualities with your truest self?

When you're ready, choose the three people who most resonate with you in this moment. Write them in the spaces provided.

Don't overthink this.

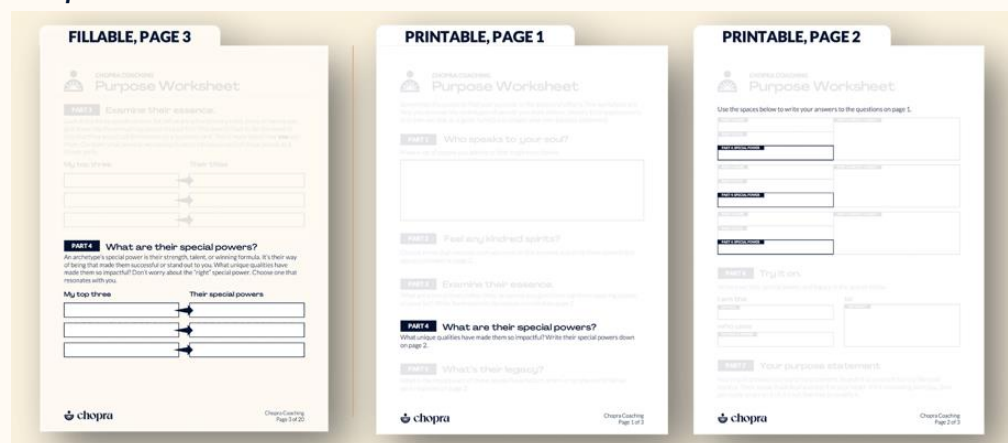
Step 3



Look at the top three people on your list. What are a few primary titles, roles, or names you can give them?

These titles don't have to be what they'd print on their business cards—this is more about how you view them. Consider what words you'd use to introduce them at a dinner party.

Step 4



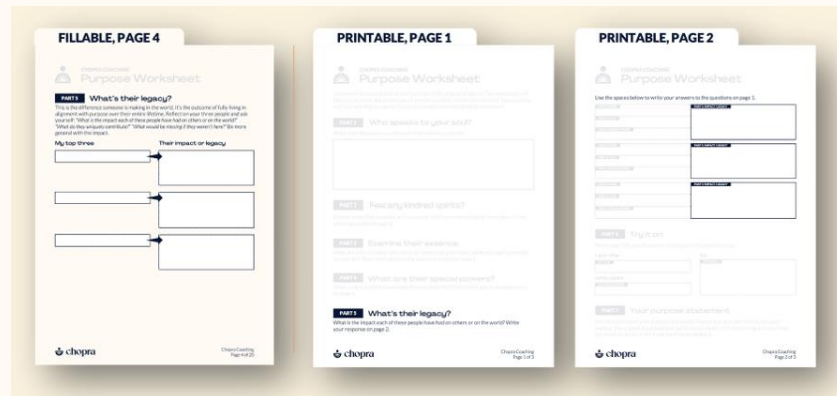
Next, we'll clarify each person's special powers. An archetype's special power is their strength, talent, or winning formula. It's their way of being that has made them stand out to you.

Reflecting on your top three people, ask yourself:

- “What about each of these people makes them great or inspires me?” or,
- “What unique qualities have made them so impactful?”

Don’t look for the “right” special power—look for the one that resonates with you.

Step 5



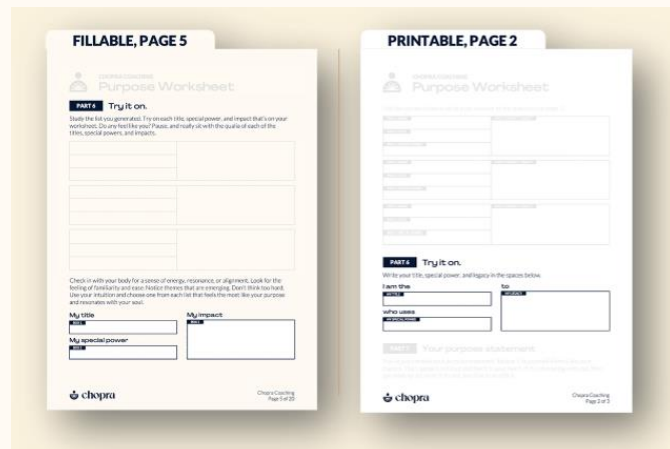
Next, we’ll get into legacy and impact. This is the difference someone’s making in the world. It’s the outcome of fully living in alignment with purpose over their entire lifetime.

Reflect on your three people and ask yourself:

- “What impact has each of these people had on others or the world?”
- “What do they uniquely contribute?”
- “What would be missing if they weren’t here?”

Be more general with the impact.

Step 6



Study the list you generated. Try on each title, special power, and impact that’s on your worksheet. Do any feel like you? Pause, and really sit with the qualia of each of the titles, special powers, and impacts.

Check in with your body for a sense of energy, resonance, or alignment. Look for the feeling of familiarity and ease. You can also look for repetition or themes that might emerge.

Don’t think too hard. Use your intuition, and choose one item from each list—whatever feels most like your purpose and resonates most with your soul. Write down your title, your special power, and the impact you want to make.

Before having your client read their purpose statement aloud, you may choose to guide them through a meditation.

If they’ve already finished wordsmithing their statement, a meditation can also be a way to more deeply embody it. You’ll receive a PDF script at the end of this session that you can use at this juncture.

Step 7



Note: On the fillable version, the Purpose Statement will auto-generate on page 6.

Sit with your statement for a few moments, repeating it to yourself silently like your mantra. Then speak it out loud and feel it in your heart.

Decide if it needs wordsmithing. You can even start back at the beginning or create multiple statements.

If it’s resonating with you, then get ready to act on it!

Integrate the statement

It’s time to help your client integrate their purpose statement.

Without integration, this activity is no more than an interesting conversation. There must be a deepening of the client’s self-awareness—and the ability to do something with this newfound awareness.

To help your client integrate their purpose statement into their daily lives, it's important to ask the right questions. You'll also need to help them devise effective home practices.

What are some questions to ask?

- How will you remember your statement this week?
- Without fear judgement or comparing yourself to others, what do you like about yourself?
- How would your relationship, project, or goal transform if you showed up as your archetype this week? How might you do this?
- What might challenge your archetype this week?
- What might you abandon or forget for your archetype this week?
- What advice does your archetype have for you as you move forward from this session?

There is always room for improv within structure. When appropriate, use your intuition and creativity to craft your own questions in the moment with clients. The questions above are only a guide.

Help your client bring it home.

After taking your client through the purpose statement exercise, you might introduce the mantra you learned in last week's Mindful Moment: Satyam. If they're already a regular meditator, offer this mantra as a daily practice.

You might also consider sharing one of these creative home practices—or coming up with your own:

- Write a short autobiography as your archetype. Include how your special powers have made an impact and influenced your legacy.
- Create a vision board for your archetype.
- Choose a favorite song, outfit, and color for your archetype.
- Choose a yoga pose that reminds you of your archetype. Do it daily.
- Repeat your purpose statement during your meditation practice, sitting with awareness of your archetype's posture.

A few final thoughts to help your client get the most out of this exercise:

- This activity is a longer, multi-step process. Give your client an overview before diving in.
- Try a warm-up together using someone from popular culture whom you mutually admire.
- Give your client plenty of time to think.
- Reassure your client that they don't have to compare themselves to the person they choose.



Purpose - Improv

Purpose – Improv

Improv Coaching

The structure of improv

Although improv coaching sessions offer freedom and flexibility, they still have a basic structure. You'll typically start with a meditation and well-being check-in, then discuss your client's experience trying to integrate last week's coaching concepts.

Together, you and your client might decide to make adjustments to their home practices, which you'll learn more about in this session. By using your fundamental coaching skill of asking powerful questions, you'll also guide clients through assessing their intentions. They may realize they need to modify the intentions they set in a previous session—or even replace them with new ones.

Let your client's needs guide the conversation. If they've found their home practices especially challenging this week, you might coach around those difficulties. And if they've succeeded, they might choose to raise the bar by making a new commitment that stretches them even further.

Let your client lead.

The check-in portion of the improv conversation might last the entire session or even just a few minutes. If you have time left in the session, ask, "What else do you want to focus on today?"

This question can be phrased in a number of ways:

- "How do you want to feel at the end of today's session?"
- "What's the most important thing in your life to focus on today?"
- "What do you want to leave our session with?"

The client's answer will act as a kind of structure in itself. As long as your listening skills, thoughtful questions, and soul reflections move them into a deeper understanding of their intention—or forward action around it—you'll have a successful improv session.

Absolute & relative

The coaching concepts of inner and outer purpose can also be thought of as absolute and relative.

From the absolute perspective, there is no good or bad karma—just karma. But from the relative perspective, some actions lead to suffering and others lead to joy. The balance between absolute and relative—inner and outer purpose—can feel paradoxical.

Ultimately, life is an unfolding of karmic conditions that started with the Big Bang. Everything is happening perfectly, in the only way it could have happened. But if a client feels triggered, stuck, or frustrated, telling them to relax and be grateful because “everything is perfect” probably won’t help in the moment.

Once fully understood, the absolute perspective can broaden a client’s outlook on life, empowering them to reframe challenges in a positive way and getting deep into their inner purpose. But introducing this perspective to a new client isn’t always the answer to issues of their relative human experience—especially when it seems like everything is falling apart. Sometimes you'll need to focus on relative purpose, sometimes absolute.

Growing up and waking up

According to clinical psychologist, psychotherapist, teacher, and author John Welwood, relative and absolute purpose are related to two similarly divergent aspects of human development: “growing up” and “waking up.”

*"Growing up" encompasses the stages of development we all pass through—from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. It's based in **psychology** and **human development**.*

*"Waking up" refers to an upward path through the states of consciousness. It's based in **spirituality** and often accomplished through **meditation**.*

You'll support your clients along both journeys.

When coaching a client to grow up, you’ll focus on their intentions. You’ll help them gain new skills, expand their capacities, move toward their goals, and overcome obstacles.

When coaching someone to wake up, you’ll help them discover that at the deepest level, they are pure awareness—the universe experiencing itself. The self-that’s growing up is just another illusion—not who they truly are.

“Our outer purpose changes with circumstances and necessarily involves time, whereas our inner purpose remains always the same: It is to be absolutely present in whatever we do and so let our actions be guided and empowered by awareness, the awakened consciousness, rather than controlled by the egoic mind. We fulfill our destiny and realize our purpose when we awaken to who we are: conscious presence.”-Eckhart Tolle

Inner purpose brings our lives into harmony with cosmic law, fulfilling the Spiritual Law of Dharma.

This law instructs us to perform three righteous actions:

1. Discover our true self
2. Identify our unique talents
3. Serve humanity

Growing up is about becoming your best self. But waking up is realizing that isn't you either—who you are is much, much bigger.

Absolute Purpose

Introduction to absolute purpose

"Not all who wander are lost."

Have you heard that phrase before? You've probably seen bumper stickers, T-shirts, and even tattoos bearing these words. It's a simple statement, but there's a reason it resonates with so many people—it contains the secret to absolute purpose.

Your absolute purpose has always been with you. You don't have to go anywhere to find it. Whether you wander about or stay put, you can find your purpose right where you are.

By now, you've studied dharma from several angles.

In the context of absolute purpose, dharma points to the true nature of consciousness.

According to the Buddha's teachings, it liberates the ego and eliminates suffering. In Vedic philosophy, dharma leads us to experience Brahman, the ultimate and unchanging reality. This is what Deepak calls the non-local domain or the unmanifest.

Once you've realized that your absolute purpose is waking up to pure awareness, you can integrate it into your relative purpose and day-to-day life.

Absolute purpose lives in the space between thoughts.

In your meditation practice, you may have experienced the gap—the space of pure awareness between thoughts. In the gap, you feel your oneness with Brahman. You discover your absolute purpose.

You can share this meditation experience with coaching clients, guiding them during sessions or helping them build a strong at-home practice. Once they've experienced absolute purpose through the gap, you can point them back to it again and again.

When to coach absolute purpose

Exercise your fundamental coaching skill of listening.

Knowing what to listen for will help guide you on where to pivot your improv coaching around absolute purpose.

Here are some examples:

- "I'm stuck and don't know where to go."
- "I'm feeling triggered, and I don't know what to do."
- "I'm just too busy."



How to Coach Absolute Purpose

- “I don’t have the capacity to work on finding my relative purpose.”
- “I can’t settle down at the end of the day. My relative purpose has too much momentum.”
- “My life circumstances are preventing me from making external shifts right now.”

How to Coach Absolute Purpose

Bringing in balance

When out of balance, each dosha's energy is associated with a particular reaction to change: fight, flight, or freeze—and no matter what your client's prakruti is, they still have all three doshic energies that can become imbalanced and emerge at any time.

A quick vikruti quiz can help to surface any current imbalances, and coaching about absolute purpose can help bring balance to all three doshas.

Finding stability

When your client is feeling triggered and wants to escape the goals they've set for themselves, use your meditation experience to guide them into the space of pure awareness. From there, they can non-judgmentally watch their thought and emotions the way a mountain watches a thunderstorm. Try asking:

- “What do these emotions look like from the perspective of your absolute purpose?”

Gaining perspective

If a client is caught up in being busy, they might actively fight against trying to making any progress. You can help them create opportunities to pause throughout the day and remember who they really are. Taking a few breaths between to-dos can have a similar effect to gazing at a star-filled sky—it's a reminder that the universe is vast, unchanging, and in control.

Accessing wisdom

When your client feels stuck, confused, or lost, try guiding them in a short meditation to point them back to the qualia of absolute purpose. Then, ask questions that speak directly to their absolute purpose:

- “You might feel stuck on one level, but what do you already know from the space of absolute purpose?”
- “What part of you is not lost or confused? What does that part know?”

Keeping it balanced

Absolute purpose is a complicated topic to coach around.

It's a balancing act to coach just enough but not too much. Some coaches get stuck in explaining the concept. Others make it seem too special—or not special enough. And spiritual bypassing can alienate your client and make them feel even more lost than when you started the coaching relationship.

Don't get stuck in the concepts.

There's a Zen saying: "The finger pointing toward the moon is not the moon." The gesture of pointing is no substitute for gazing directly at the moon or landing on it.

There's a risk of getting caught up in describing the concepts behind absolute purpose, rather than coaching your clients toward the **experience** of it. This is a common pitfall of coaching absolute purpose.

Resist the temptation to poetically describe topics that might make you feel wise but are overly abstract to your clients. Remember, it's about their needs—not your ego.

Instead, meet clients where they are. Provide just enough conceptual framing to pique their interest, then focus on helping them move toward the qualia of absolute purpose.

Try not to make it too special.

Do you remember being a new meditator and thinking, "Is this the gap? Probably not, since I'm asking myself. So, am I even doing this right? I'm lost..."

As a new meditator, it's easy to spend an entire meditation session thinking about not being good at meditating. The more you think about the gap and the harder you strive to experience it, the more it eludes you. This just leads to frustration.

Abstract coaching concepts can feel the same way. Go ahead and introduce absolute purpose to your client, but don't set it up as some special achievement or state they must reach in order to feel purposeful.

Instead, help them focus on taking one step at a time through coaching conversations, meditation, and home practices. If they seem overwhelmed or frustrated, you might even share a story about your own challenges with expectations—and how you overcame them.

Be careful not to encourage nihilism.

Part of experiencing one's absolute purpose is recognizing that everything is already perfect. From this place, there's nothing to do, nowhere to go, and nobody to be.

For most people, this realization brings on a sigh of relief and a sense of liberation. But others have a different interpretation: "If there's nothing to do and nowhere to go, why bother doing anything?"

The basis of nihilism is the conclusion that life is empty and meaningless. A client who feels this way may not see the point in having a relative, outer purpose.

From the absolute perspective, life is empty of one meaningful conclusion we're all meant to arrive at. But from the relative perspective, we get to imbue life with our own meaning.

If your client seems caught up in nihilism, encourage them to lean into the meaninglessness. Then ask if they want to stay there—or if they're open to making their own purposeful meaning.

You'll examine this concept in greater depth when studying the meaning cornerstone.

Steer clear of spiritual bypassing.

When a client is experiencing an emotion, you aren't comfortable with, it might be tempting to bypass it for the sake of having a cheerier session. This might work in the short term, but there's a cost of skipping over the difficulty—it goes unaddressed, unprocessed, and unhealed.

For example, when a client is angry, reminding them to rest in their true nature because everything is ultimately perfect might offer relief in the moment. But if you don't circle back to investigate the anger from the place of absolute purpose, that relief won't last.

As a coach, use absolute purpose as a way into discomfort, not out of it. In the shadow and meaning cornerstones, you'll learn specific techniques for coaching your clients through difficult emotions.



Introduction to Relative Purpose

Introduction to Relative Purpose

What's your dharma?

Have you heard that before? "What's your dharma?" is a common question in pop wellness culture—asked by social media influencers, celebrity soul-seekers, and yoga apparel brands.

Asked in those contexts, it might get responses like, "to rescue feral cats," "to become an accountant to the stars," or "to make the best vegan froyo on the West Coast!"

This kind of dharma is what the Buddha called our "right livelihood." It's what coaches often call being your "best self." Yet relative purpose isn't just what you do with your life—it's how you do things and why you do them.

A job is not a purpose—but it may be an expression of relative purpose.

You might be fortunate enough to find fulfillment in your current job, or you may be looking to find more purpose as a Chopra certified coach. While your chosen career may align with your core values, your special powers, and the legacy you want to create, your job is not your purpose.

Relative purpose is not attached to an employer, a job title, or work responsibilities. These are just vehicles through which a person can offer their purpose to the world—but there are other ways to express relative purpose that have nothing to do with a paycheck.

When to Coach Relative Purpose

Listen for coachable moments.

By practicing your fundamental active listening skills, you can pinpoint moments to integrate some coaching around relative purpose. Look for indications that your client is feeling like their current life has no space for their purpose, or—on the other hand—if a certain topic seems to make them truly come alive.

Listen for coachable moments.

By practicing your fundamental active listening skills, you can pinpoint moments to integrate some coaching around relative purpose. Look for indications that your client is feeling like their current life has no space for their purpose, or—on the other hand—if a certain topic seems to make them truly come alive.

What are some examples?

- "I'm lacking motivation and need some direction."
- "I'm just questioning life in general right now."
- "I feel like I'm longing for something more."
- "Let me tell you about my new passion!"
- "I just discovered something that really intrigues me!"



How to Coach Relative Purpose

How to Coach Relative Purpose

Coaching relative purpose

The archetype and purpose statement exercises you learned to facilitate in Session 2 are formal, step-by-step processes to coach clients around purpose. But there are also informal ways to help clarify, leverage, and integrate this cornerstone.

Relative purpose isn't a one-time exercise or one-session topic—it evolves and deepens over time. It can be woven in and out of many sessions throughout the coaching relationship.

There are many ways you might coach around purpose in an improv session.

Explore past purpose.

Although relative purpose can change over time, it's also common for it to remain consistent over one's lifetime. Either way, exploring your client's past purpose can be a doorway into a conversation that clarifies a current sense of purpose.

This could be as simple as asking your client, *"Think back to a time when you had a stronger sense of purpose. What was it about that phase of life that felt purposeful?"* As you listen, take mental notes on what they were doing and who they were with during that time.

Inquire about the values they honored and the mindset they had while engaged in these activities.

Check in with the qualia of their purposeful period—then ask how they feel describing it.

After investigating, use reflections to help them articulate their purpose clearly. Then start exploring small ways they can start expressing that purpose in their current conditions.

If their current life circumstances leave no room for their purpose, then the conversation might explore ways they can change their external conditions to make space for their purpose. Ask, *"What might you have to say 'no' to so you can say 'yes' to your life's purpose?"*

Notice and reflect the energy.

The qualia of accessing purpose looks and feels like being truly alive. It's the call of the personal soul—the first layer of the causal body.

When a client is in their purpose or talking about something related to it, their energy will surge. Their body language and facial expressions will light up because they're being enlivened by spirit. They'll become more animated, excited, and impassioned.

When you notice this energy during a coaching conversation—even if the topic isn't explicitly about purpose—a bell should go off to offer a soul reflection.

You might say, *"I noticed your energy went up when you started talking about this topic. What's that about?"*

On the other hand, you may notice a dullness or lack of aliveness in a client. If nothing is connecting your client to their aliveness, you might inquire about sleep, nutrition, self-care, meditation, or other aspects of wellness. These daily practices help keep the prana flowing through us. They make us feel more alive and help connect us to our inner wisdom and purpose.

Evoked the archetype.

The collective soul is a more expanded layer of the causal body. Archetypes serve as a sort of inner coach—they're a way to access a client's inner wisdom and sense of purpose. Once a client has identified their projected archetype, whether through a formal exercise or an improvised conversation, it can remain a recurring theme throughout the coaching relationship.

For example, anytime your client is fretting over a decision, you can ask, "What would your archetype choose?" When they're struggling to honor their intentions, you might ask, "What advice would your archetype offer?"

When you study the **meaning** cornerstone, you'll learn to help clients shift their perspective on a situation. During that conversation, you can ask questions like, "How might your archetype interpret this situation?"

Uncovering the motivation

Your client's relative purpose is the answer to the question, "Why?"

When they're connected to their "why," their motivation follows.

Expressing purpose isn't a means to an end—it's an end in itself. Forrest Gump didn't run with the purpose of winning a medal; he "just felt like running." He ran because it felt natural, and he was deeply compelled to do it. That's intrinsic motivation.

When someone's "why" is to be more themselves and share all of who they are, they find themselves in a constant state of fulfillment. Put another way, a client who is **intrinsically** motivated by their purpose uses their special powers to positively impact the world.

You've already learned how to use the structured archetype exercise to help your client uncover their purpose. But you can inquire into their "why" with simple, on-the-spot questions too.

Sometimes, you'll need to ask "why" several times to reach the deepest, most compelling truth.

What about clients who are extrinsically motivated?

Some examples of extrinsically motivated intentions are gaining fame, accruing wealth, or becoming more physically attractive. It's perfectly fine to want these things. But if a client is motivated by them for the wrong reasons, or if their desires for egoic fulfillment are out of balance with their purpose, they'll probably be disappointed.

Often, people who set intentions like these end up chronically seeking but never finding. And even if they achieve these goals, they still aren't happy. This is what happens when the ego sets goals.

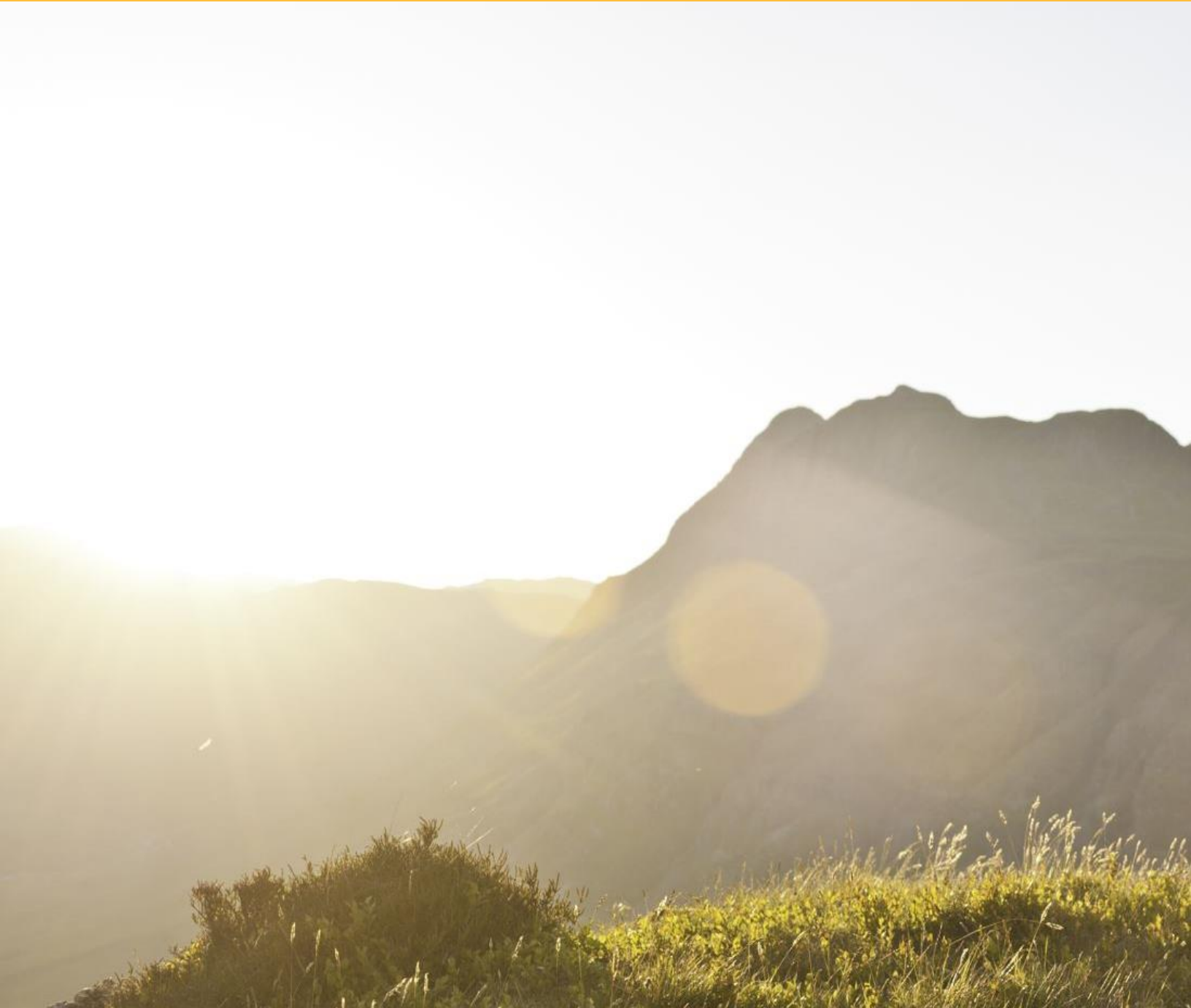
If you hear a client setting what feels like an excessive number of materialistic intentions, get curious. Don't judge—just ask, "If you were to achieve all these things, then what?"

Maybe fame will help them spread their message further, or wealth will help them scale their mission. But if their “why” is to win approval, prove their worth, redeem themselves, or beat the competition, then there's work to be done.

The ego is a protective mechanism, so extrinsically motivated intentions are often overcompensations for an inner vulnerability. Get curious about the part of the client that needs approval, feels unworthy, or beats themselves up for falling short.

Eventually, you'll be able to draw on your meaning and shadow coaching skills during these conversations. Sometimes, though, compassionate listening is all that's needed.

For now, use the coaching conversation to bring greater awareness to the client's “wounded why” and help them begin moving toward wholeness of purpose.



Overcoming Obstacles

Overcoming Obstacles

Sometimes, you'll need to pivot away from purpose.

Stress is a major obstacle to coaching relative purpose. It pulls us into what Deepak calls a state of constricted awareness. In this state, the only options are to fight, flee, or freeze. When awareness is constricted, there's no physiological or neurological capacity left for thinking creatively, broadening our perspective, or accessing purpose.

If a client comes to a coaching session in a foul mood or becomes triggered by something in the conversation, it's probably not a good time to talk about purpose. In fact, trying to force the client into the topic of their global impact when they're feeling small and limited might even make them feel worse.

If a stressed-out client comes to you, try to address the stress first by offering a short meditation. If they can shift back into expanded awareness, you may move into purpose coaching.

But if they can't make the shift, it's best to abandon the topic of purpose for now. You might offer a reflection that normalizes their feelings, then offer them space to talk about whatever is on their mind. You might even ask permission to switch back into the role of teacher—offering ways to stay in balance and combat stress through the practical, personalized, and preventative six pillars of health.

In addition to stress or overwhelm, your client may be feeling fear, apathy, or even boredom with their purpose. Rest assured, this does not mean you're failing them as a coach. These reactions are perfectly normal—and you can still help them get through the challenge.

Overcoming the fear

Choosing a life of purpose can mean leaving the predictable and familiar to launch into something new and unknown. And ultimately, the client chooses whether they take a courageous step toward well-being or stay in the bland comfort of routine.

This work is like coaxing a client from a dark but cozy cave. If they take a step outside, see their shadow, and run right back in, your job is to go in with them. Ask what it was like to step into the sun, what was so scary about their shadow, how it feels to be back in their cave, and what it would take to peek back out. Use powerful questions to explore what's going on with them.

Sometimes a client's purpose can feel too grand—even inaccessible—compared to their current condition. You can help them shrink it to a more approachable size or break it down into smaller, more manageable steps.

Working around the ebbs and flows

The path toward well-being is—unfortunately—not a state of perpetual bliss. The journey your client takes throughout the coaching relationship will include periods of breakthrough and growth—but also plateaus, dips, and regressions.

Your client may go through phases when they can't access their qualia of purpose. If they think they should feel purposeful at all times, they'll just experience disappointment. Let them know feeling down is a normal part of life, but purpose is always there—like the stars during the daytime or the sun behind the clouds.

Knowing when to let go

Relative purpose can change over time. If a client expresses their purpose but you notice a mismatch between what they say and their energy around it, get curious. They may be getting bored.

People can build an identity around a purpose—especially people with a long history of personal development work. Letting go of an old purpose statement can feel like ending a bad relationship or closing an unprofitable business. It might be for the best, but it can still cause grief or a feeling of being lost.

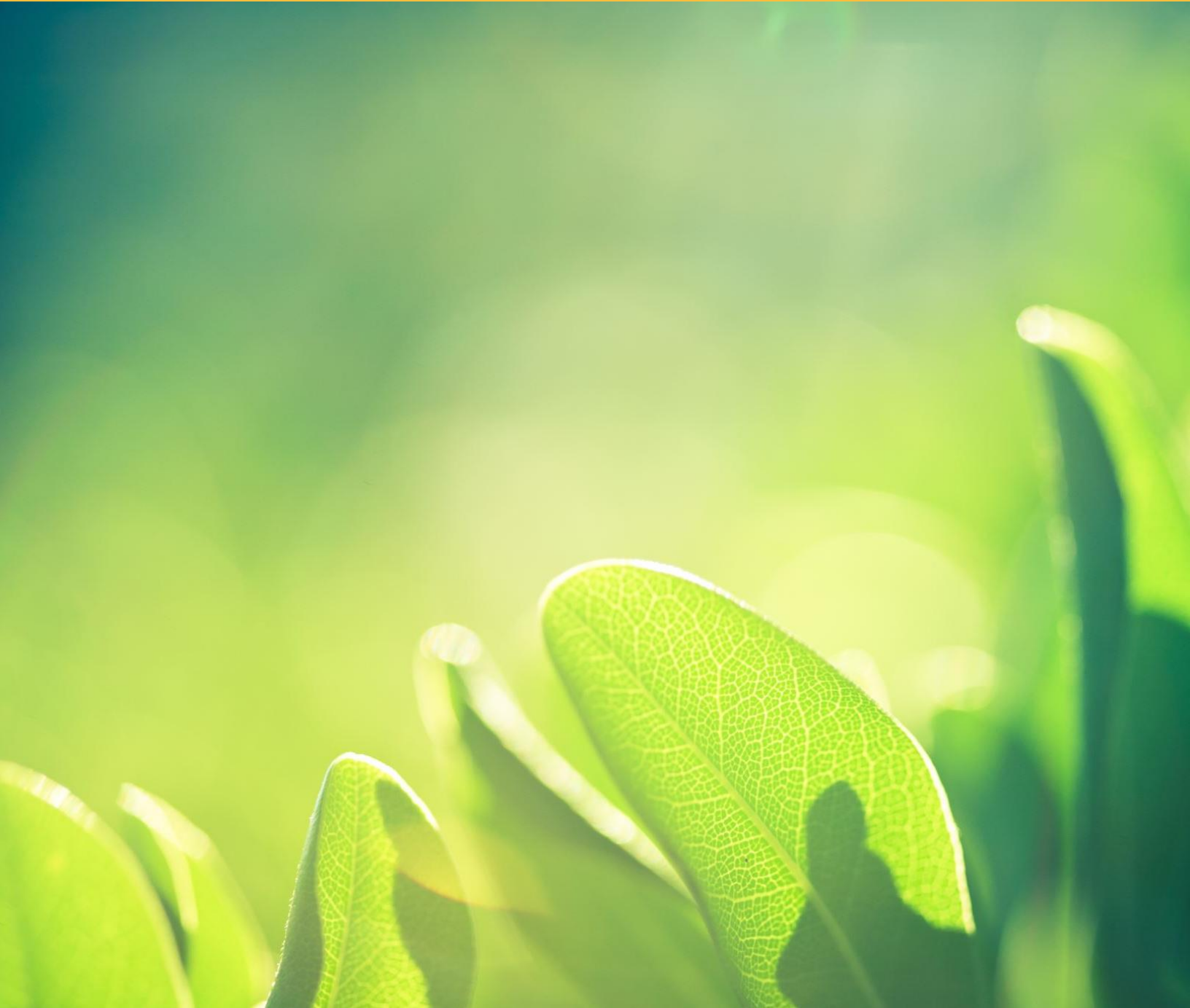
If you suspect a client's purpose is reaching the end of its lifespan, gently inquire into how it used to feel compared to how it feels now. Let the client choose what to do with their observations. They might decide they're ready to move on, or they may want to give it one more shot.

Relative purpose questions

These questions—or similar ones—might help your client uncover their relative purpose:

- When do you feel the most alive?
- What do you feel called to serve? What impact would you like to make?
- What would your archetype do in this situation?
- On a scale of 1-10, how aligned with your purpose are you right now?
- When do you lose your sense of purpose?
- What's holding you back from fully aligning with your purpose?

When our absolute and relative purposes are balanced, we have a clear sense of direction in life.



Clarifying Core Values

Clarifying Core Values

Why core values matter

Some say happiness is living a life consistent with one's values. But why is that?

An entire universe of potential values exists, but some are primary and abiding. These are our core values, which remain the same throughout our life. They're the fundamental beliefs and guiding principles that form the foundation on which we live and work.

Core values aren't our purpose—they're our essence. They function like a compass pointing us toward true north, underlying our purpose and guiding us as we navigate life. Without our values, we would have no direction.

Values inform your clients' actions. They affect the choices they make on the path toward alignment with purpose and the fulfillment of desires.

The purpose of clarifying values isn't just for clients to know who they are, but also to guide their day-to-day decisions—so they can become more of who they are.

Helping clients clarify their values

Empower your clients to come up with their own core values.

Often clients will over-intellectualize or poeticize their core values. They'll try to come up with something that sounds good, rather than considering their lives and uncovering the values already present in their everyday actions.

If a coach simply offers a prewritten list of values to choose from, there's a tendency for clients to identify the most desirable or socially acceptable ones—rather than those that are truly most important to them.

Start with powerful questions.

A great way to begin the values conversation with your client is to ask a few questions. Don't overthink it. This isn't the most out-of-the-box strategy in the coach's repertoire, but it can be effective.

These questions—or similar ones—might help your client clarify their core values:

- What is most important in your life?
- What do you value the most?
- What must present for you to feel like yourself?
- What would you do if money and time weren't factors?
- What have you consistently made an important part of your life, regardless of circumstance?

Build your values vocabulary.

As a coach, you'll help clients reveal their core values through powerful questions and guided visualizations. While prewritten values lists are not usually appropriate for use in coaching sessions, studying them can expand your own "values vocabulary." Having a strong vocabulary of values to choose from will help you support clients in identifying and articulating their own.

Here's a short list to get you started:

- Growth
- Justice
- Reputation
- Kindness
- Faith
- Community
- Adventure
- Creativity

Guided visualization

Your client may benefit from a guided visualization exercise.

Use or modify this script to guide your client through a core value integration plan.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

Please close your eyes...

PAGE
1

Step 1: Start a guided meditation.

On page 1 of your Activity Script worksheet, write a short introduction to a 1- to 3-minute meditation. Then, use this script to begin the exercise with your client. Focus on increasing awareness of the body and breath.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

Identify a special moment in your past when life felt especially rewarding or poignant. This may be a time in your life when you felt a sense of purpose, resonance, or flow.

Relive this moment in your mind's eye as clearly as you can. See it in as much detail as you can remember.

PAGE
1

Step 2: Dive into their past purpose.

Still on page 1, help your client identify their purpose.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

- What about this experience was satisfying?
- What about this experience felt important?
- What were you doing, and who were you being?
- What themes emerge as you remember this time?
- What values were you honoring?
- What impact were you making?

PAGE
2

Step 3: Take note of possible values.

Flip to page 2. Use or modify the script to ask powerful questions to uncover ideas for your client's core values.

You may ask these questions during the exercise or in the coaching conversation that follows. Use your intuition.

Write your client's answers in the Possible Values List on page 3.

Possible Values List *(coach's notes from visualization exercise)*

- *Family*
- *Wealth*
- *Success*
- *Growth*

PAGE
3

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

- When you were talking, what I was hearing is that *family, wealth, success, and growth* are all very important to you. Does that feel right?
- Are there any of your values missing from this list that you would like to add?

PAGE
2

Step 4: Share the list.

Using the script on page 2, read the list you captured aloud to your client. Check in with them for resonance.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

- If you had to choose three core values from this list, what would they be?
- Don't overthink it. Choose whatever most resonates with you in this moment.

PAGE
2

Step 5: Uncover 3 core values.

Using the script on page 2, ask your client to choose their top three values from the list you captured.

Write these in the appropriate fields on page 3.

Core Value 1

Family

Core Value 2

Success

Core Value 3

Growth

PAGE
3

Note: This document is designed for the coach to fill out and complete for the client.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

- On a scale of 1-10—with 1 meaning “not at all” and 10 meaning “completely”—how well are you honoring each of these values?
- Look at the values you’re not honoring well. What can you do over the next few weeks to start honoring them more?
- What would it look like to honor each value at a 10? What would it take to reach that level?

PAGE
2

Step 6: Co-create the integration plan.

Once your client has identified their top three values, you can help them create an integration plan for each one.

Core Value 1	Core Value 2	Core Value 3
<i>Family</i>	<i>Success</i>	<i>Growth</i>
My satisfaction	My satisfaction	My satisfaction
3	8	2
My integration plan	My integration plan	My integration plan
<i>I will...</i>	<i>I will...</i>	<i>I will...</i>

PAGE
3

Have them rate how well they currently incorporate these values into their daily life. Ask powerful questions to help them integrate the values further.

Write their answers on page 3.

Note: After walking your client through steps 1–6, give them the completed page 3. Encourage them to keep this page somewhere close by and easily visible over the next week.



Purpose Home Practices

Purpose Home Practices

What's a home practice?

Home practices are where the coaching concepts meet real life.

Some clients might think attending coaching sessions should be enough for them to make their intentions a reality. It's important to emphasize that most of the work and growth happens between sessions, in their day-to-day life.

When introducing home practices, you can describe them as specific actions the client can take throughout the week to honor their intentions, develop better habits, and move closer to their well-being goals.

For a home practice to be fully effective, you'll need a basis for client buy-in.

This means the best practices aren't just assigned by you (the coach), but co-created between you and your client. You can contribute ideas and offer challenges, but the client will ultimately choose what they want to commit to.

Questions are your best coaching tool for helping your client make this choice.

Here are a few examples:

- What can you do differently this week as a result of our session?
- You set this intention a few weeks ago, but you haven't acted on it yet. It sounds like it still feels important to you. How can you honor your commitment this week?
- What's the one thing we covered today that is most important to integrate into your upcoming week?

Purpose home practices

Consider your client's personality, interests, and natural doshic tendencies.

Vata clients often appreciate creative practices like writing or painting. Pittas, on the other hand, may find it easier to commit to movement-oriented practices. Kaphas are most likely to enjoy reflective practices such as journaling.

You might also ask about any constraints your client faces. Maybe they're low on time due to a hectic work schedule, or their energy levels are often low from chasing their children around. It's also important to consider how much support the client can expect from family and friends.

Home practice 1 - Archetype autobiography

What it's for: Linking your client's experience to their projected archetype

Instructions for your client: Embody your archetype. Write an autobiography from their perspective, describing the impact they've made on the world or in their community. Then, you might step back into yourself and write the next chapter of your story—what will your archetype help you do next?

Home practice 2 - Purpose statement posture

What it's for: Helping your client ground themselves in absolute purpose

Instructions for your client: Choose a yoga pose or meditation posture that reminds you of your archetype. Each day this week, repeat your purpose statement while meditating in that posture.

Home practice 3 - Archetype cues

What it's for: Helping your client connect to their archetype in day-to-day life

Instructions for your client: Choose a favorite song, outfit, and color for your archetype. Whenever you hear this song, wear this outfit, or see this color, remember your archetype and consider how you might better embody it.

Home practice 4 - Shopping for purpose

What it's for: Helping your client identify how they project their relative purpose onto others

Instructions for your client: This week, notice who you're drawn to and why. Imagine what the person's purpose is, put it into words, and reflect on ways you might share it. The point isn't to guess what their purpose really is—it's to notice how you see yourself in others.



PART 2

Coaching Intention

Coaching Intention

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Introduction to Intention

Introduction to Intention

What is intention?

Intention is at the core of every vision and goal. It is the impulse that compels you to manifest your dharma and create your life.

Nothing in the universe happens without intention. It's the creative power that fulfills the need for material success, loving relationships, spiritual awakening, and radiant health.

In the Vedic tradition, the subtlest level of intention is called *sankalpa*. This is a commitment formed by the heart and mind. It's a tool for refining the will, focusing the mind, and bringing harmony to the subtle and physical bodies.

Sankalpa: Sankalpa is often translated as intention, resolve, or heartfelt desire.

Deepak teaches that sankalpa is the seed structure of intelligence around which time, space, and matter consolidate into a manifested event.

What is desire?

Desire is an impulse that arises—a kind of want. Things you want and don't want pop in and out of your mind, but true desire is what you really want in your innermost being.

Desire is activated by using two qualities: **attention** and **intention**.

- If you want something to grow stronger in your life, direct more of your attention to it. If you want something to diminish in your life, withdraw your attention away from it.
- Your intentions have infinite organizing power. This means all of your heart-centered desires are supported by the infinite organizing power of the universe.

Whether you realize it or not, desire has led you here. It's the underlying motivation behind every intention.

Many people passively wait for their desires to be magically fulfilled, but the intention activities you'll experience allows you to co-create with the universe and manifest your deepest desires.

How intention works

Setting your intention is like planting a seed.

Each intention contains the essence of what we can experience and become. But for it to flourish, we must nurture it—and give it time to reach fruition.

The fundamental mechanics of intention manifesting into reality are based on the principle that *pure potentiality organizes its own fulfillment*.

Pure potentiality organizes its own fulfillment through synchronicities of:

- time
- space
- energy
- information
- matter

When we pay close attention to these synchronicities and **participate in co-creation with the universe**, we **magnify the fulfillment of desire**. We do this by taking regular action and committing to spiritual practice.

What are goals?

Intentions are different from goals.

Intentions are a creative, intuitive impulse. They emerge from beyond the mind.

Goals are more pragmatic. They involve precise, quantifiable, and time-bound objectives.

Use this scenario as an example.

Think of building your dream home.

- **Intention** is the vision you have to build your dream home. You see it in your mind's eye. Once you have a mental image of your vision, you can go deeper and break it down into goals.
- **Goals** are the blueprint. The blueprint gives you a plan and instructions on how to build the house.

Let's use a quantum physics metaphor.

Intentions are like desires in the “wave form” of pure potential. Goals are like desires in the “particle form” of measurable, objective reality. There are two types of goals you can help your clients set, subjective goals and objective goals.

Subjective goals can't easily be pinned down, measured, evaluated, or checked off a list. They often focus on feelings, which are hard to assess.

What are examples of subjective goals?

- *I want to wake up feeling motivated.*
- *I want to feel more supported and loved.*
- *I want to stop criticizing myself.*
- *I want to experience peace.*

Objective goals are specific and measurable.

What are examples of objective goals?

- *I will attend a meditation retreat in November.*
- *I will lose 10 pounds before my birthday.*
- *I will clean my office before Sunday night.*
- *I will join a dating app by Friday at 5:00pm.*
- *I will record an EP by the end of the year.*

The purpose of action

Every vision needs goals and an action plan.

An action plan breaks down your vision and goals into smaller, more achievable steps.

What are actions?

Use this scenario as an example.

Back to building your dream home.

1. **Intention:** Intention is the vision you have to build your dream home. You see it in your mind's eye. Once you have a mental image of your vision, you can go deeper and break it down into goals.
2. **Goals:** The goal is the blueprint. The blueprint gives you a plan and instructions how to build the house.
3. **Actions:** Actions are the actual steps you need to take to execute the blueprint. They're the construction phase of the building process. They're like pouring the foundation, building the framing, and installing the plumbing, electricity, and insulation.

Planned and spontaneous right actions will move you from any vision through the process of manifesting your desires.



Look for Synchronicities

Look for Synchronicities

What is synchronicity?

Nothing is coincidental, and everything is meaningful.

The final step in the intention process is for you to release your intentions to the universe and pay attention to synchronicity.

Synchronicity: Synchronicity is defined as a meaningful coincidence, setting it apart from random coincidences that have no meaning.

Coincidences are signs from the universe that you're on the right path.

When you're living in present moment awareness, you notice meaningful signs from the universe. You not only feel validated in the trust of universal support, but also receive clear directions on next steps and answers to deep questions.

Unexpected opportunities and seemingly chance encounters spontaneously arise to help you move toward manifesting your intentions—in a way you could have never orchestrated.

Look for evidence that the universe is supporting your intentions. If you enjoy journaling, you may want to write them down.

Pay attention and watch for clues, such as:

- You think of someone, and a few minutes later, the person calls or texts.
- You want to read a book, and although you haven't told anyone about it yet, a friend gifts it to you.
- You think of a word, and the next minute someone says it.
- You randomly hear a one-of-a-kind message that feels like it's meant just for you.
- You learn something new for the first time, then hear the topic referenced on the radio shortly after.
- You imagine getting a parking spot up front, and someone pulls out at that very moment.

Continue to ask yourself:

- Am I noticing clues from the universe?
- How do I feel about these synchronicities?
- Are they getting stronger?

Tune in and keep moving forward with your action and practice plan toward your desires, without spending too much time deciphering the deeper meanings of synchronicities.



Intention - Structured

Intention – Structured

The Purpose of Intention

The intention activity is designed to help clarify the path ahead.

Often clients come to coaching because they have a vague desire to be happier, more peaceful, or more successful—but sometimes they don't see a clear path forward. They may even have a good understanding of their purpose, but not know how or where to start making small steps toward achieving their big-picture well-being goals. Or maybe they don't really know what they want in life—much less how to get it.

Without well-articulated intentions, your client may find themselves spinning in circles. Although they work hard to make well-being changes in their life, they're unfocused and unclear on the direction forward. They wonder why they're not getting from where they are to where they want to be.

The structured intention activity can help your clients create a tangible vision of well-being, then start working toward it with specific goals and focused actions.

Listen for signs that your client isn't quite clear on their intention.

For example:

- *"I'm not really sure what I want."*
- *"I want to improve my well-being, but I don't know where to start."*
- *"I've tried setting intentions, but they didn't work out."*

The structured intention process

Through the intention process, you'll co-create realistic, achievable goals. To help your client clarify the path ahead, you'll guide them in an exercise to see the fulfillment of their desires in their mind's eye. Then, you'll coach them through an activity designed to make their big-picture goals feel more tangible and actionable.

There are eight steps in the structured intention-setting session.

1. Capture the well-being vision
2. Capture the moment with the Wheel of Life
3. Prioritize 3 areas of intention
4. Set specific well-being goals
5. Create an action plan
6. Create a contingency plan
7. Make a personal commitment
8. Let go and trusting the universe



The Well-being Vision

The Well-being Vision

The power of visualization

A clear vision helps your client imagine a bigger life.

Your responsibility as a coach is to help them tap into their pure potential. When your client is able to expand their identity beyond the individual ego-self, they unlock the visionary response within.

Meditation is a foundational tool to help your client shift into more evolved biological responses and expand their vision of who they really are.

They may have never explored their full potential or felt what it's like to achieve something they deeply desire, but you're here to help them get in touch with a felt sense of well-being in their physical body, experience their vision, and ultimately tap into the field of infinite possibilities.

The felt sense visualization

Learn to guide a felt sense visualization.

Use or modify this script as a foundation to guide your client in a felt sense visualization.

Step 1: Begin with an overview.

Use this script to begin the felt sense visualization with your client. Encourage your client to let go of expectations. Let them know there's no right or wrong. Whatever they experience during the visualization is what's right for them at that time.

Step 2: Invite your client to close their eyes and settle into stillness.

Ask your client to sit in a comfortable upright position. Encourage them to find a position that is relaxing, yet wakeful.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

This visualization will guide you to focus on your felt sense in the present moment, and allows you to take that experience into the future. Visualizations can take place in your minds eye as fleeting images, but in this exercise you'll also tap into the qualia of the experience that can be felt throughout your entire body. Let go of any worries you may have about not being a good visualizer.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

When you're ready, come into a posture that allows for wakefulness, stability, and relaxation. If you haven't already, close your eyes. Turn your attention inward. Begin to settle into stillness.

Step 3: Ask them to bring their awareness to the breath.

You can start by asking them to take a few deeper than normal breaths. As they begin to settle into stillness, you can remind them that the breath instantly brings their awareness to the present moment. Invite them to feel into the present moment and notice and begin to notice sensations, images, feelings, or thoughts as they arise from moment to moment.

Step 4: Allow them to explore physical sensations in the body.

Use the script or improv to guide your client to move their awareness to different parts of the body. Ask them to notice sensations as they arise, without judgment or anticipation.

Part 5: Give them permission to open mind-body-spirit.

Invite your client to invite a sense of freedom. Remind them that it's okay to visualize outside of reality. Nothing is off limits.

Part 6: Invite them to visualize.

Ask your client to look back and bring to mind a time of life. It may be a phase of life, milestone, or specific memory. Ask them to remember the time in as much detail as possible. You may want to guide them through the five senses to enliven the details of the visualization.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

Sometimes it can be helpful to begin by taking a few deeper than normal breaths, releasing tension and letting go on each audible exhale. As you settle a little deeper, begin to notice the experience you're having. Feel into what it's like to be alive—as you—in this moment, with your mind and this body. Be fully present with whatever arises from moment to moment, with a sense of kindness and curiosity.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

Shift your attention now toward the body and feel what it's like for your body to be sitting. Notice the pressure between the hips and your seat. Notice your feet . . . and hands. Feel the contact between skin and clothing. Maybe even feel your heart beating.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

As I take you through this visualization, let go of any images, sensations, or logistics of your current everyday life. Let your imagination be free.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

Visualize a specific time in life. This can be an entire phase of life or one specific memory. Play the experience out as clearly as you can in your mind's eye.

For example:

- Listen to the sounds around you—near and far off in the distance.
- Feel the temperature of the air on your skin.
- Look at the objects around you and the range of colors.
- Notice if there is a taste in your mouth.
- Become aware of smell or scents.

Step 7: Encourage them to connect to the memory.

Once they've connected to the memory, ask them what words come to mind to label the experience. Encourage them to bring thought words to mind, while still staying with the sensations and experience in the body. You may go deeper and ask them to feel the energy or vibration of the words they chose.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

What were you doing? Who were you with? Bring to mind the feelings you are experiencing. What words are coming to mind? What are the feelings associated with those words?

Step 8: Ask them to tune into the experience.

Guide them to stay with each feeling as it naturally comes and goes. Allow them to be with these feelings for 2-3 minutes of silence.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

Now, I invite you to release the words or labels. What is the felt sense you are experiencing in the body? Allow yourself to feel the energy beyond whatever words, thoughts, or images describe this experience. Stay with the feelings. Allow them to wash over you.

Step 9: Slowly, guide your client back into activity.

Just as you give your clients time to rest after they have released the mantra in Primordial Sound meditation, give your client a moment to rest after releasing the feelings of the experience.

Invite your client to take a few deeper than normal breaths and begin to reconnect to the physical body. You may want to suggest they wiggle their fingers and toes, or gently stretch. When they feel ready, ask them to gently open their eyes.

VISUALIZATION SCRIPT

Release the feelings. Take a few deeper than normal breaths. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes.

Use powerful questions to help your client make the most of the experience.

- What physical energy and bodily sensations did you experience?
- Did you experience a feeling of well-being?
- Did any images appear in your mind's eye?
- What feelings came up for you?
- Did any words come to mind?

What if nothing happened?

Some clients will feel the visualization was a little too abstract.

You'll have some clients with giant imaginations who can see mental images in great detail and clarity. Others won't see or feel much at all during a visualization exercise, and that's okay.

But before dismissing a "Nothing happened" response as a failed attempt at visualization, use a few powerful questions to dig a little deeper. Sometimes, "Nothing happened" actually means "I'm not sure how to explain my experience during the exercise." It might also mean, "What I experienced was at such a subtle level that I wasn't able to fully understand it."

Chances are, with a little nudge, your client will be able to express some level of understanding from the visualization exercise.

You may want to reflect back to them the sensations, feelings, or thoughts they experienced during the visualization. Not all people will "see" images, but they will have some sort of sensation, feeling, or thought.

What if it wasn't perfect?

Some clients feel pressured to see the perfect vision of well-being.

The purpose of a well-being vision is to help clients imagine a bigger life for themselves. It pulls them out of their comfort zone, inviting a sense of freedom from past limitations. In the vision, clients exist momentarily beyond the conditions and limitations of everyday life. But this big stretch can cause a few challenges.

It's possible for the idea of a big vision to activate a client's inner perfectionist. Rather than feeling inspired, they may feel immense pressure to reach even higher standards than they've already set.

If you sense your client falling into perfectionism, check in with them about what they're feeling. Remind them that the perfect vision is the one that's right for them. Give them permission to scale their vision back to something that inspires them.

What if it feels a little far-fetched?

There's a subtle difference between vision and fantasy.

While some of your clients may shy away from big visions, others might fall to the opposite end of the spectrum—to their equal detriment.

There's a difference between thinking creatively about the future and imagining a fairy tale. While visions stretch what's possible, fantasy lacks grounding in reality. Since your client remains the expert on their own life, you might not be qualified to discern the difference between their vision and a fantasy. But if you have a hunch they might be getting lost in self-delusion, you can absolutely initiate a discussion. Personal growth

You might ask how much of this visualization will be within their control--and how much they expect the universe to provide. Tell them they should start by owning at least 50 percent of the responsibility.

If you fear your client might be flirting with fantasy, don't panic. Truth usually separates itself from fiction as soon as you start plotting action steps.

What if it feels too big?

You might need to coach your client a little in overcoming their doubt.

Sometimes a client connects deeply with a powerful well-being vision but doubts themselves as soon as they start putting it into words. If your client experiences this, emphasize that they can be a little playful with their vision. Remind them that they have plenty of time to refine it.

You might also inquire into the thoughts and emotions behind the doubt. In the next two cornerstones, you'll learn how to engage with limiting beliefs and shadow emotions. For now, ask if your client can set their doubts and qualifiers on the shelf for the week, allowing their vision to take root.



Clarifying Priorities

Clarifying Priorities

The structured coaching process begins with the **Chopra Wheel of Life**.

As you learned in your experience week, the Wheel of Life visually represents eight areas of well-being in our day-to-day lives.

Personal growth: This might include the trajectory of goals your client has already set, or it may refer to limitations or hindrances to their general ability to grow.

Romance: Romance could include satisfaction with a current partner, finding a potential partner, or even just the feeling of romance and spontaneity in general.

Family + Friends: This could include relationships near or far—past, present, or future.

Finances: This might include the amount of money your client has in the bank, or perhaps their relationship with money in general.

Environment: Your client's environment could be a specific location like a home, city, or state, but it could also refer to larger concerns like taking care of the world in general.

Health: This may include any or all of the six pillars of health: nutrition, movement, sleep, meditation, emotions, and self-care.

Recreation: This could refer to the quality or quantity of your client's planned vacation time—or even just small things that bring enjoyment into everyday life.

Career: This could be related to your client's current job, or to their longer-term career goals.

There is no right or wrong way to interpret each of the slices of the Wheel of Life. While leading your client through the activity, try to let your client's understanding of each of the areas lead the conversation, rather than instructing them with definitions of what each area means to you.

The Worksheet: Part 2

Using **Part 2** of the **Intention Worksheet**, have your client rate their level of satisfaction or fulfillment in each of these areas, using a scale of 1 to 10. A rating of 10 means that at this moment, they feel completely fulfilled in that area. A zero means that they're really suffering in that area right now.

Depending on your and your client's preferences, you may choose to use either the fillable or printable version.

Using the printable version, your client can color in the wheel according to their levels of satisfaction. The fillable form offers a chart on Page 2 that's easier to fill out digitally.

Remind the client that this is just a **subjective** assessment—there's no need to list pros and cons or try to explain or validate their ratings. Tell them to simply lean into their felt sense.

How it works

The Chopra Wheel of Life helps your client isolate their areas of opportunity.

There's only so much that can be accomplished in an eight-week period. By helping your client choose just a few priority areas upfront, you can eliminate potential future distractions—and keep both yourself and your client from becoming overwhelmed.

Even by focusing on only three priorities, your client will likely experience growth throughout all aspects of their life. This is because each area of life impacts the others. If your client is experiencing level 10 stress in their career, they may not have enough time for recreation—which in turn might affect the energy they bring into their relationships, and so on. After reducing work stress, they may have more time for fun—and more energy for positive relationships. On the other hand, if they're not ready to make a change at work, they might want to instead start by setting intentions for their health. Once that's improved, they're likely to be more resilient to work stress. Success begets success.

When your client sticks to just a few priorities that help move their life into balance, an upward spiral of momentum is created—one that energizes all other intentions.

Using powerful questions

Remember your core coaching skills.

Powerful questions will help your client make the most of the Wheel of Life exercise. After they've filled in the wheel, try asking questions to shift their perspective and prompt introspection.

- How do you feel after looking at your life from this perspective?
- Were there any surprises on the wheel?
- How bumpy would the ride be if this were a real wheel?

The Worksheet: Part 3

The best place to start is wherever your client is ready.

Using Part 3 of the Intention Worksheet, empower your client to identify the three areas of well-being in which they feel most compelled to make a change.

These don't have to be the areas they gave the highest score—just the areas they're ready to shift.



Setting Goals

Setting Goals

Throughout the coaching relationship, you'll help your clients set their intentions and create specific, actionable goals. When you coach a client to hold both intention and goals mindfully, they can enjoy both the journey and the destination. But remember the paradox of absolute and relative purpose: your client is always already “there”—ultimately, they just need to realize it.

The distinction between the journey and the destination is essentially an illusion—the here-and-now is all that actually exists. With that in mind, you can guide your clients to balance setting goals while also living in the present moment.

The Worksheet: Part 4

Using Part 4 of the Intention Worksheet, encourage your client to come up with three objective goals they can work toward during the next month. These should be aligned with the three well-being priorities they've chosen to focus on.

Your clients may need some guidance in setting objective goals.

There's nothing wrong with making subjective goals. But if you find your client getting stuck while trying to come up with actionable goals they can measure over time, you can help them out by asking permission to momentarily step into the role of a teacher. They may benefit from a quick lesson on the difference between subjective and objective goals.

Subjective goals:

Subjective goals can always be fulfilled in the here-and-now. When your clients are immersed in the present moment, they're living in alignment with their true selves.

- Can't easily be pinned down, measured, evaluated, or checked off a list.
- Often focus on feelings, which are hard to assess.
- Include examples like “Wake up feeling motivated,” “Experience peace in my heart,” and “Live a happier life.”

Objective goals:

Objective goals can help your clients plan for their future. The best action they can take to manifest desires is using right now—the present moment—to plan.

- Are easy to identify, evaluate, and check off a list.
- Focus on specific and measurable results.
- Include examples like “Dye my hair green by Friday at 5:00pm,” “Join a dating app before the new year” and “Record an EP before my birthday.”

What if the goal no longer resonates?

Encourage your clients to let go of goals that no longer serve them.

When a commitment turns into an unhealthy attachment, your client can suffer. If their sense of identity becomes fused with a goal, it can be difficult for them to discern when it's no longer serving them. This is why many people cling to tanking investments, unhealthy relationships, and outdated family traditions.

If you see signs that your client's goal is no longer serving them, ask about the cost and benefits of holding onto it. If they identify a high cost, ask why they fear letting go.

The Meaning and Shadow coaching skills you'll learn later in this program will be valuable when a client is holding onto an outdated goal, but just naming their fear can be a powerful reality check. Once they've let go of goals that no longer resonate, you can help them find a new vision and goals more aligned with their present well-being priorities.

Alternatively, you might ask the client to define success and commit to a timeline: *"If I haven't made significant progress toward my definition of success by this date, I'll let go of this goal."*

What if expectations are too high?

Goals should be treated as experiments, not expectations.

When progress toward a goal doesn't keep pace with a client's expectations, frustration and shame can emerge. For example, if your client's goal is to meet the love of their life, they might hold an unhealthy expectation that they'll find their soulmate on a dating app within a few days. After a few weeks with no luck, they may feel discouraged—and begin doubting relationships in general.

But another client might download the app with a different intention: to tell the universe they're ready for love. If they don't end up going on any dates, they'll still enjoy the learning process.

One big difference between intentions and expectations is the onus of responsibility. Intentions rely on your client's choices, but expectations usually demand the alignment of variables outside their control.

Since it's impossible to control everything all the time, encourage your clients to think of their goals as experiments, not expectations. Coach them around holding goals lightly—and finding fulfillment in the process.

What if wins become routine?

Participating in the intention process is a cause for celebration.

All too often, we sacrifice the journey for the destination—and postpone happiness to a later date when we've finally achieved our goal. Being too results-driven can make any win feel just routine. The error here is obvious to spot, and you'll learn a gratitude practice next week to help your clients remedy this mindset.

But there's another challenge you might not see coming: Once that long-awaited future is finally here, your client may not even enjoy their achievement. Maybe they're already busy with new goals, or they may not know how to slow down and just be.

This unhealthy outlook is akin to planning, packing, and hiking all the way up to the peak of the largest mountain, then closing your eyes to the view and hiking back down. From the absolute perspective, reaching this gorgeous summit is just another moment along life's journey. But from the relative perspective, it's a big moment worth celebrating!

Acknowledging your client's wins—big and small—along the way will allow them to store those positive emotions and build a sense of self-efficacy. When they finally reach their goals, encourage them to really take a pause and savor the feeling of progress and accomplishment.

What if—are we there yet?

Help your client infuse purpose into each action along the way.

The late David Simon—a renowned neurologist and Chopra co-founder—defined stress as the gap between where you are now and where you think you should be. The incongruence between your client's current and imagined states can cause them undue stress, especially if they start comparing where they are now to a future ideal. This can also foster an “Are we there yet?” sort of impatience.

You can address this by coaching your clients to infuse their actions with purpose along the way. Bring in relative purpose by asking how the next step aligns with their values, archetype, or purpose statement. Ask how joy arises as their special powers move them toward their goals.

This may be an opportunity to revisit coaching around absolute purpose. Have them consider what's good about where they are now. What about their current state would be just fine if they never did anything differently at all?

Meditation can help clients remember that they're already enough—and that by working on their intention, they're only moving toward the dharma they already had.

What if distractions get in the way?

Gently guide your clients to return to their goal like they do their mantra.

In Primordial Sound Meditation, we repeat a mantra or follow the breath as a single object of focus. When thoughts, feelings, sounds, or sensations distract us, we simply notice the wandering mind and return to the mantra or breath with an attitude of kind acceptance. You can coach your clients to treat their goals the same way.

Just as the breath of a mantra is the focal point of their meditation, your client's goal is a focal point in their life.

It helps them develop greater concentration and direction—ultimately anchoring them to the present moment.

Thinking about goals in this way will also help your clients understand the seemingly paradoxical relationship between commitment to goals and non-attachment to outcomes. If they're losing motivation, getting anxious for the outcome, or slipping toward self-sabotage, remind them to simply notice they've strayed from the intention—then gently but firmly return.

What if the outcome is too specific?

Help your clients prioritize development over performance.

Rather than measuring success by a specific outcome, you can coach clients to find learning and development in the process of moving toward a goal.

When a client reports they've successfully completed their home practices, you can affirm their strengths and reinforce what they're doing that's maintaining the forward momentum. This is certainly beneficial—but we tend to learn and develop more from processing a challenge or perceived failure than we do from acknowledging a success.

When your client reports that they completely blew it with their home practices, ask if they're willing to examine how they got in their own way. The learning here can be truly life-changing.

What if the goals change?

Allow your client's goals to evolve.

Your client may begin the coaching relationship because of an externally motivated goal. But in time, their goal is likely to become more purpose-based. Extrinsic goals naturally tend to evolve toward more intrinsic intentions as self-awareness and understanding deepen.

Eventually, some clients even reach a level of consciousness wherein they no longer need explicitly defined goals. They trust themselves and life to the point that they no longer depend on goals to guide them. When they're fully connected to their heart and in the flow of nature, they intuitively know what choices to make.

Until your clients have reached that state, you can help them set goals and intentions that align with their current phase of life and level of consciousness. The most important thing is to meet your client where they are and start with the goals that inspire them.



The Action Plan

The Action Plan

Intro to Action

Help your client come up with an action plan to achieve their bigger goals and intentions.

Your client's intention is just a hop, skip, and a jump away.

It can be hard for a new client to wrap their heart and mind around the journey from point A to point B—especially when point B feels thousands of miles away. But by guiding your client through the process of creating an action plan, you can help them begin breaking down their long journey into smaller, more immediately achievable steps.

With smaller steps, your client can experience the joy of celebrating every win along the way. That joy, in turn, builds positive memories and reinforces their confidence, self-efficacy, and desire for further action.

Both planned and spontaneous action will move clients toward realizing desires.

The Vedic seers made distinctions between different types of actions—or karma. Two of these are especially relevant to the coaching relationship:

Agami karma: These are actions planned to happen sometime in the future, such as saving to buy a house.

Prarabdha karma: These are actions created in the present moment, such as the decision to spontaneously visit an open house

Both planned and spontaneous right action are needed to move clients from their goals and vision into the process of manifesting their desires—**from where they are to where they want to be**. Planned actions can take the form of a single step toward a goal or a behavior that's repeated daily.

When an action is intended to be ongoing, it's called a practice—or sadhana. This Sanskrit word literally translates to “a means of accomplishing something.” It's a regular discipline undertaken in the pursuit of a spiritual goal.

When to begin an action plan

Is my client really ready to create an action plan for change?

Action is a theme that runs through the entire coaching relationship. As each action is checked off the list, it's honored—and then more actions are planned. The actions and practices that you and your client focus on should feel natural and inspire a state of flow. They shouldn't be overwhelmingly difficult or *boringly* easy. You're looking for the sweet spot of balanced effort.

The Spiritual Law of Least Effort states that when a person's actions are aligned with their true nature and motivated by love, they'll experience a sense of ease even when they take on more than they're accustomed to.

Finding this sweet spot depends partly on how ready the client is to change. According to psychologist James O. Prochaska's transtheoretical model, the behavior change process has five phases: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance.

As a coach, you'll spend most of your time focusing on three of these phases:

- Contemplation
- Preparation
- Action

The contemplation phase

In the contemplation phase, your client acknowledges that they want something different but aren't ready to take the first step. Rather than forcefully pushing past this stage, focus on **contemplative action**.

Explore your client's fears around taking the first step—and the possible benefits of moving forward.

- Encourage your client to journal about what they gain—or lose—by not taking action.
- See if they'd be interested in taking a friend to lunch who has already made the shifts they're looking to make. Preparing a list of questions ahead of time can help drive the conversation.
- Coach them to contemplate what life will be like if they never take that first step toward their goals.

The preparation phase

In the preparation phase, the client is on the verge of action—planning to move once everything is ready. They may have made a few small changes, but before entering the full-on action phase, they'll need to gather resources or overcome a few temporary obstacles.

You can ask powerful questions to help your client take preparatory action steps.

- What data do you need to collect before you'll be ready for action?
- What materials do you need to gather before you'll be prepared to move forward?
- How can you get organized enough to commit?
- Where might you find the information you're looking for?
- How will you know when it's time to take the leap?

The action phase

In the action phase, your client is already following their plan. The more developed the plan is—and the more work they've put into the first two stages—the greater their success will be. After a few weeks in this phase, start experimenting with your client's perceived limitations.

Use the fundamental coaching skill of bold requests to nudge them beyond their comfort zone.

- I ask that you demonstrate how serious you are about increasing your sales by making twice your usual number of calls this week.
- I request that you open up to your boss—tell him how you really feel when he criticizes you in front of others.
- I challenge you to say yes to every opportunity that comes your way this week.
- For the next 21 days, I challenge you to set your alarm for 4:30am so you can meditate and have the “you time” you’ve been wanting before your family wakes up.

Be aware of your coaching presence when you're offering a bold request or challenge. Offering a bold request is not about what you want for them—it's just a bigger stretch toward a goal they've already identified as a priority.

Your client may not respond to your bold requests with enthusiasm. Fair responses to your request might include “yes,” “no,” or sometimes a counteroffer. But even when your client declines your bold request or offers an alternative to it, they'll usually end up doing more than they originally would've committed to without your influence. It's a subtle nudge toward a more expansive action.

The Worksheet: Part 5

Once your client is ready for change, infinite potential actions exist.

Using Part 5 of the Intention Worksheet, you'll ask your client to write down a few quick actions they can take over the next month to align with the goals they set in Part 3. To begin narrowing down possible actions into an action plan, you'll want to facilitate a brief brainstorming session with your client.

The potential outcomes of a brainstorming session are infinite. You'll help your client generate ideas, actions, practices, alternatives, and possible solutions. This is a non-judgmental, co-creative, no-holds-barred exercise to generate ideas—sometimes even outrageous ones—to expand the client's idea of what's available to them.

Powerful questions are key to facilitating a successful brainstorming session.

- What's the gap between where you are now and the manifestation of your desires?
- What's the first step toward achieving your goal?
- What specific signs will show that you're headed in the direction of your goal?
- What's on your to-do list for this goal?
- How will you know you're on the right track?

What could go wrong?

Your client may miss the mark—or even fall back into old patterns.

At some point on their journey, your client may slip back into old habits, and that's perfectly normal. One of the core teachings from your Meditation Certification program—the Software of the Soul—helps to explain this phenomenon.

The Software of the Soul is the conditioning of past actions. It's a realm of limited possibilities. Whenever we perform an action—or karma—we create a memory of that action. The memory leads us to a desire, and our desires prompt our future actions.

As you may have experienced yourself, it's easy to get locked into a pattern that leads you back to the same actions—or similar ones—over and over again.

If you see this happening, you may need to jump back into the role of the teacher.

You've coached your clients to use an action plan to strategically move away from old patterns and consciously choose new actions to create the life they want to lead. These conscious actions allow your client to use their memories to move toward their goal—rather than being used by them. But old conditioned patterns can be strong. Sometimes planned actions aren't enough.

When your client is feeling stuck in past experiences, this may be an opportunity to ask permission to step into the role of a meditation teacher. As a teacher, you can educate them on the importance of meditation.

As you're well aware, meditation can help your client move beyond the limitations of thoughts, memory, and desire—into the field of infinite possibilities. Primordial Sound Meditation can take your client beyond the thinking process to access the realm of pure potentiality. When your client understands pure potentiality, they'll realize that the universe organizes its own fulfillment. By creating a consistent meditation practice, they can work with the infinite power of the universe to co-create spontaneous right action. That said, it's important to ask permission before offering education.

Share the wisdom of meditation to help your client break free of past patterns.

- Meditation allows you to tune into your body's inherent wisdom.
- With a consistent meditation practice, you become the conscious witness to action.
- Through meditation. You become more present and conscious in any action.



The Contingency Plan

The Contingency Plan

Naming the obstacles

Your client will inevitably be met with a few obstacles along the way.

Your client will face challenges during their journey of living with intention. Fortunately, you can help them plan ahead. This might be as simple as looking ahead at their calendar to see what potential conflicts might be coming up. You can also use soul reflections to discuss the challenges they've faced when trying to accomplish goals in the past. It's likely that the same—or similar—obstacles will come up again and again.

Focusing on potential obstacles or past failures shouldn't scare your clients or shift the attitude toward pessimism. It's an empowering and optimistic exercise to help them prepare for the road ahead—with the ultimate goal of fulfilling their desires and living with intention.

Offer soul reflections to help your client uncover obstacles from their past.

- What I'm hearing is that your career has interfered with your ability to develop relationships in the past.
- It's almost like you're a ship with no sail—staying afloat by ebbing and flowing with the tide, but without a real gust of wind to push you forward with your financial goals.
- It sounds like your past failures have the power to dictate what's possible for your future.

There are two types of obstacles your client will ultimately encounter.

By switching to a **teacher role** and explaining these two types of obstacles, you can help your clients prepare for the challenging—but rewarding—road ahead.

Inner obstacles: These obstacles come from within. They include limiting beliefs, inner criticism, patterns of perfectionism, doubt, and feelings of unworthiness.

Outer obstacles: These obstacles come from the outside world. They include everyday distractions, unexpected emergencies, and everything in between.

If/then statements

Scientifically speaking, if/then planning has shown a high success rate.

Our brains are naturally geared toward absorbing information through contingencies. If/then intentions are like mental behavior algorithms that eliminate the need to make choices at any given moment. When we're prepared with an if/then plan, rather than relying on motivation alone, we're more likely to execute a plan—especially during stressful or challenging times.

Research done on if/then planning has called the strategy implementation intention. In one study by the British Journal of Health Psychology, participants who were asked to write down if-then statements with the intention of exercising had a **91%** success rate.

In the same study, those who **did not** create implementation intentions only had a **29%** rate of success.

The Worksheet: Part 6

Help your client create a contingency plan.

Using Part 6 of the Intention Worksheet, you'll help your client succeed with their intentions by planning ahead for contingencies using their own if/then statements.

1. Start with the Ifs.

Help your client identify potential challenges they may face along the way. Powerful questions can help you get your clients thinking about possible obstructions.

- What outer obstacles might interfere with your plan?
- What inner obstacles might hold you back?
- What has stopped you from achieving goals in the past?

Ask your client to consider a few of the obstructions they might face when working toward their commitments, and then document them in the "And if this happens" section of the worksheet.

2. Co-create the Thens.

Once your client has identified potential obstacles to their goals, ask them to consider ways they might confront those blockers. The archetype statement they created during the structured Purpose activity might help them get started. Guide your client in creating their contingency plan by asking a few pointed questions.

- How would your archetype meet these challenges?
- Which of your special powers can you use to help you nip this in the bud?

Now that your client has considered their thens, ask them to write the solutions in the "Then I will do this" section of the worksheet.

A contingency plan reminds your client that **they're in the driver's seat**. They become emboldened to take the steps needed to embody their intention.



Committing Then Letting Go

Committing, Then Letting Go

Help your client summarize their intentions with a bold personal commitment. Then, give them the freedom to let go and trust the universe.

The Worksheet: Part 7

Making a giant list of their goals, action items, and contingency plans might get a little overwhelming for your client. Using Part 7 of the Intention Worksheet, embolden them to summarize their intentions into a short, actionable **personal commitment**.

Their personal commitment can be treated as a daily mantra or affirmation. It should be succinct enough that it's easy to recall, but powerful enough to keep them motivated as they work toward living with intention. **But most importantly, it needs to hold meaning for your client.**

It can be as vague as "I fully commit to living with intention"—or as specific as "I fully commit to exercising every morning at 6am." There is no right or wrong statement here. The intention of the personal commitment is to give your client something simple to walk away with and integrate into their daily life.

Try a guided meditation

Once your client has decided on a personal commitment, a short meditation can help them really take ownership of their intention and feel its transformational energy.

- **Step 1: Invite your client to close their eyes.**
We'll begin with the simplicity of breathing. Invite that felt sense of well-being into your body. You may feel the muscles of the body relaxing. At the same time, your posture may be lifting. Your body may feel lighter. You may notice an inward-facing smile on your face.
- **Step 2: Ask them to repeat their personal commitment.**
Silently, inside your mind, introduce your personal commitment—your intention statement. Repeat it silently to yourself. As you continue repeating it, expand your awareness to connect with universal energy. Silently tell the universe what you intend to do.

- **Step 3: Ask them to listen to their inner response.**
Notice the tone of your inner voice. How does it sound to you? Say it with inner strength. Say it with joy. Say it with resolve. Say it authentically from your heart—clear and true. Feel the vibration of your commitment. Visualize how your life will be different when you are living this commitment. Repeat the commitment one more time. Then, rest in silence.
- **Step 4: Wait a few moments, then invite them to let it go.**
Imagine that your commitment statement has been released to the infinite organizing power of the universe. Allow yourself to rest in stillness. Just be. Allow yourself to simply exist. Trust in yourself and the joy of your commitment. If you water your intention like a seed, it will grow.

Feel the universal vibration of this commitment. As you think it silently one more time, think it with resolve. **May it be so.**

Letting go and trusting the universe

Remember, the universe has their back.

An important part of the intention activity is to support your client to let go and trust the universe. The universe is always orchestrating the complete fulfillment of your client's desires, but some clients may try to force a specific outcome. Or there may be a whirlwind of events that even their contingency plan didn't account for.

Once the outcome is released to the fertile ground of pure potentiality, their intention will continue to grow, and then bloom when the season's right.

You can help your clients build their confidence in the universe and remind them who they truly are: divine beings who have the support of the infinite organizing power of the universe.

Teach your clients how to be on the lookout for clues and synchronicities.

There's a paradoxical relationship between action planning and letting go.

Although the infinite power of the universe will ultimately help your client continue moving in the right direction, they'll still need to commit to the practice of living with intention. You can help your clients understand this paradox by reminding them to embrace both truths.

Give them a little guidance with a few key reminders:

- Practice detachment from outcomes but commitment to striving for excellence.
- Be patient with the universe, and continue the relationship of co-creation.
- Remember that your goals are flexible. Allow your commitments to change and evolve over time.
- Keep your eyes open for signs from the universe that you're moving in the right direction.

Synchronicities

Your client will inevitably face ups and downs along their journey.

As a coach, you're there to help your client sustain their momentum. One way to do this is by helping them see tangible evidence that the universe is supporting their intentions.

Synchronicities and coincidences are just clues. They let us know we are on the right track or point in a direction for us to follow.

Think about it metaphorically.

Most people arbitrarily see meaning in one place and coincidences in others. You can bring in examples to help your clients understand that synchronicities aren't just random chance, coming out of nowhere.

Synchronicities are shaped by perception.

Imagine you're looking at a close-up view of a painter's palette. You see random jabs of their brush dipping into various colors. These jabs don't seem to have any orderly pattern or plan. But if you pull back and zoom out, you'll see the painter is actually creating a beautifully composed, totally orderly, totally intentional work of art.

Your mind can perceive a single object or event from different angles. If you've read Deepak's book *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire*, you can go deeper and explain how he teaches synchronicities—that everything is perfectly ordered and put together with everything else. **Synchronicities are merely quick glimpses of this perfection.**

These glimpses are powerful because they help us wake up to the possibility that we don't live on a speck of a planet in a random universe. **We live in a meaningful universe**, far beyond the superficial appearance of random, arbitrary—and sometimes unfair—occurrences.

The Worksheet: Synchronicity Tracker

A tangible way to help your clients let go and trust the universe is to have them track the synchronicities they experience using the **Synchronicity Tracker** on the last page of the *Intention Worksheet*. By keeping their eyes open to evidence that the universe is supporting their process, they'll gain confidence that they're on the right track and that the universe has their back.

Ask them to keep their Intention Worksheet handy.

When they notice the universe aiding them in their journey throughout the next month, tell them to make a quick note of it by jotting down the date and what happened—the when and what of the synchronicity. There's no need to spend too much time evaluating the meaning behind each event. Synchronicities are the language of the mysterious organizing force—the universe itself. Meaning emerges from the field of pure potentiality and pops up in a way that defies cause and effect.

Think back on your Chopra Meditation Certification experience. You learned that the true self is pure potential, so—in a way—we create our own synchronicities. We may give the universe credit, but ultimately we are the ones manifesting our own desires, and the universe is just a reflection of that.

Synchronicities are ultimately the self-reminding us to wake up to our true, essential nature.



Intention - Improv

Intention – Improv

Going Deeper into Desire

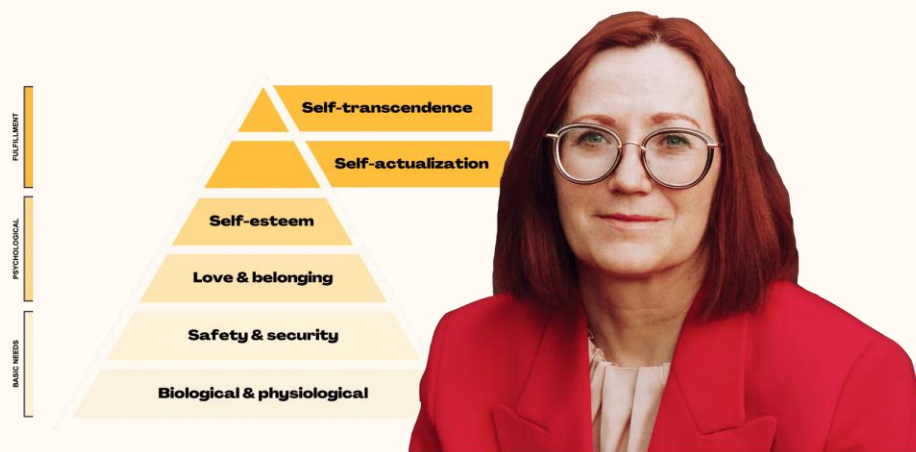
You helped clients clarify their priorities, find their well-being vision, set specific goals, choose action steps, and create a contingency plan. You also support them in trusting the universe and integrating their vision into daily life.

Through the structured intention process, you learned how to walk your clients through a step-by-step intention setting process.

Desire drives change and evolutionary growth.

It's desire that moves us and gives our life meaning and direction. Your clients may have come to you because they desire something better.

Even our early ancestors were driven by the impulse to evolve and adapt, but their desires were linked to survival. They sought food, shelter, and procreative opportunities. These base-level desires are within each of us, but once the basic survival needs are met, the natural desire is to want more—to move beyond the basic needs to higher psychological needs and spiritual fulfillment.



Reflect on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

You learned Maslow's hierarchy of needs in Health Certification. His theory says that once our base-level desires are met, our desires move up a hierarchy toward love and belonging, self-esteem, and—ultimately—self-actualization and self-transcendence.

Our bodies need shelter, our hearts need connection to others, and our spirits need transcendence. These are all healthy desires--and even necessary to pursue.

But there's a distinction between a **survival need**, a **spiritual desire**, and an **egoic desire**.

Needs and desires

Survival needs

If a client's most basic needs aren't met (the levels at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy), it's hard to achieve anything beyond (above) them. If we're not fed, housed, and feeling secure, it's difficult to find love and belonging or spiritual desires.

Basic needs must be fulfilled before higher-level desires can be met.

Two types of desires

1. Egoic desires

Egoic desires include those for status, popularity, and success in competition. They also include materialistic desires. Materialistic ego desires often include things like nicer clothes, a bigger home, and a more attractive body. Even self-realization can be co-opted by the ego as a way of wielding spiritual power over others.

Although fulfilling them can temporarily satisfy the search for pleasure, power, or influence, egoic desires don't lead to long-lasting fulfillment. When an appetite for desire gets out of balance, the ego experiences an insatiable craving for more.

But when the ego is in balance, heart-based desires arise—like the aspiration for greater well-being and purposeful work that impacts the world.

Egoic desires may bring temporary satisfaction, but they won't lead to lasting fulfillment.

Hedonic adaption, also known as the hedonic treadmill, explains why egoic needs only lead to momentary satisfaction.

This term refers to the observed tendency of humans to quickly return to a relatively stable level of happiness, despite major positive or negative events or life changes.

Psychologists identified the tendency for people to quickly return to a stable level of happiness—also known as their happiness set point—after major life changes or events. Researchers have evidence to support that big changes, such as winning the lottery, don't affect the set point for happiness as much as we imagine.

We're wired to maintain equilibrium.

If your client achieves their fitness goals, scores a raise, buys a bigger house, or gets a new car, their desires will rise along with their gain. On this hedonistic treadmill, the seeker continues striving for more and more—but never seems to get anywhere.

2. Spiritual desires

Maslow's research meets Vedic philosophy in the realm of spiritual fulfillment. After transcending egoic desires, humans can pursue more lasting satisfaction—like living a more purposeful and meaningful life.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs culminates in the supreme qualities of self-actualization, self-realization, and self-transcendence. This is the level of desire toward which you'll coach clients.

Understanding the distinctions between survival needs, egoic desires, and spiritual desires will help you coach your clients.

As you coach clients around these topics, be careful not to judge. It can be tempting to negatively judge desires that seem ego-centered, but as a Chopra Coach, you know the ego isn't some fatal flaw to be suppressed or eliminated.

The ego isn't bad, it's just limited. You'll coach clients to understand and befriend their ego so they can keep it in perspective. When a client has a healthy relationship with egoic desire, it's fine to enjoy the fulfillment of material desires. After all, who doesn't like getting a shiny new car or the latest smartphone?

Ultimately, though, you should hold a bigger vision for your clients—placing spiritual fulfillment above egoic pleasure.

Empower your clients to create a powerful vision of their future selves.

Your clients may have spiritual desires that are overshadowed by lower-level needs. You'll help them clarify their spiritual desires, then guide them to create a powerful vision—one that inspires hope and optimism.

Aspiring toward the manifestation of this vision can guide clients along their path, informing every choice they make. But that doesn't mean it will be easy—goal conflict is likely to arise at some point.

Goal conflict

At some point during the coaching relationship, your client is likely to experience goal conflict.

Goal conflict: Goal conflict is when despite an aspiration for spiritual fulfillment, your clients opt for something that offers short-term, fleeting pleasure instead.

The goal of long-term spiritual fulfillment is in direct conflict with the desire for instant reward. This desire might be junk food, a nap, hours of scrolling through social media, or a million other shiny, seductive, sweet, and salty distractions.

It's human nature to occasionally favor short-term rewards over a greater payoff at some point in the future.

If your client chooses to satisfy an egoic desire, they'll likely experience a short burst of dopamine—a type of neurotransmitter that plays a role in how we feel pleasure.

For example:

- If your client eats the cookie, it will taste good.
- If your client takes the nap, their body can veg out.
- If the client scrolls through social media, they can temporarily entertain themselves.

These aren't necessarily bad outcomes—in fact, your client may view them as benefits. But when short-term goals around immediate gratification undermine longer-term goals around lasting fulfillment, there's a real conflict.

Your client will eventually feel frustrated that they're not achieving what their heart **really** wants.

Help your clients reduce or ignore the pull of temporary pleasure.

They may even need to endure momentary discomfort to pursue their longer-term goals.

Delayed gratification: Delayed gratification is a concept that will help your client cultivate the ability to wait to get what they want.

Delayed gratification is the opposite of immediate reward. It takes **strength**. Fortunately, research shows we can broaden our capacity for it through practice.

The practice of self-restraint is similar to what Yogis know as the *Yamas*. As the first of Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga, the Yamas are a behavioral code for the way yogis relate to the world. But rather than providing your client with a pre-fab guide to help them live an ethical life, you'll instead coach them to decide where they need to apply self-discipline for the sake of long-term spiritual fulfillment.

Most of your clients will already exhibit behavioral patterns linked to delayed gratification. For example, clients may:

- Toil at their job to receive a paycheck later on.
- Invest toward retirement and save money for big expenses.
- Exercise, meditate, or eat nutritious meals to improve overall well-being.

All of these activities offer payoffs along the way—eventually helping them accomplish their long-term goals. Your client may eventually conclude that practicing the pillars of health—nutrition, movement, sleep,

meditation, quality emotions, and self-care—are worth pursuing for their own sake. But they don't always start there.

Help your clients establish daily practices.

The second limb of yoga is known as the *Niyamas*, which translates to "positive duties" or "observances", and are thought of as recommended practices for healthy living and spiritual fulfillment. Rather than offer a list of healthy habits to your client, you'll coach them through a process of identifying the healthy habits they'll actually enjoy.

You'll likely have clients who intellectually understand the benefits of daily practices, such as moving often, meditating daily, and eating well—and desire the results of well-being—but don't yet enjoy these activities as much as their existing unhealthy behaviors.

Research helps us understand why this is—so you can better help your clients.

The Marshmallow Experiment

You may have heard of the 1960's marshmallow experiment.

Researchers told hundreds of 4-year-olds that if they could sit in a room with one marshmallow for 15 minutes—without eating it—they could have two when the time was up.

The kids tried hard to resist the pull of enjoying one marshmallow now, for the clearly better outcome of getting two in the future. Yet unsurprisingly, two-thirds of the children ate the marshmallow.

Two-thirds of the children chose short-term reward.

It wasn't a shocking outcome. After all, they were only four years old. But do you think a group of adults would have done any better?

Versions of this study have been done with college students, offering different incentives—even financial ones. As it turns out, grown-ups don't do much better than preschoolers at delaying gratification.

Hold your clients' intentions and well-being vision as a guiding light to help them through the challenges.

Your clients will be tempted. They'll want your help to guide them toward their intentions and avoid temptation. This can feel daunting if they haven't yet embraced a lifestyle centered around health and wellness.

There are two simple strategies for coaching your clients to exert consistent, disciplined effort toward future fulfillment—rather than choosing short-term, hedonic pleasure.

1. **Gratitude:** appreciating what already exists in the present moment.
2. **Visualization:** being able to clearly see and connect with a compelling future self.



Gratitude for the Present

Gratitude for the Present

Empower your clients to cultivate gratitude, even when it's hard.

Gratitude is possible even under difficult circumstances.

Coaching your client toward gratitude points to all that is working well right now—despite present challenges that can derail clients from realizing their intentions. This requires a shift of focus from what the client wants in the future toward appreciation for the wonder already present in each moment.

As a coach, you'll help your clients through difficult times in their life. They may find it challenging to see the light when they're buried so deeply in their current challenges—or too narrowly focused on their future to fully enjoy the present.

Although it may be hard, encouraging your client to find even one or two things to be grateful for in this moment can help them to be more present, and can put them on a trajectory of reaching their desires, intentions, and goals.

According to happiness researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky, people who feel consistently grateful also feel happier, more energetic, and more hopeful.

Grateful people tend to:

- Value helpfulness, empathy, spirituality, and forgiveness
- Experience positive emotions more frequently and are less materialistic
- Experience less depression, anxiety, loneliness, and envy,

Fortunately, we can intentionally cultivate gratitude to enrich our lives.

The science of gratitude

Gratitude is directly linked to an increase in happiness.

The world's leading scientific expert on gratitude, Robert Emmons, reveals how gratitude is related to happiness. In one study, they split participants into three groups. Every participant kept a journal. Each week the participants were asked to perform a task.

1. **Group 1** wrote about five things they were grateful for.
2. **Group 2** wrote about five things that displeased them.
3. **Group 3** verbally described five events that happened.

At the beginning and end of the study, the participants' happiness levels were assessed. After journaling for just a few weeks, those who wrote about gratitude were **20%** happier. They reported feeling more joyful, attentive, energetic, determined, and strong than those who wrote about what displeased them.

Of course, it's easy to feel thankful when life is going great—but what about gratitude practices when your clients are navigating difficult times?

Gratitude in difficult times

To experience lasting fulfillment regardless of life's ups and downs, your clients must be able to experience gratitude in difficult times.

It can be helpful to remind clients that the strengths that make them who they are today could be compensations for past vulnerabilities. Much of the resilience they have today is because of difficulties they overcame.

When a client is going through a hard time, ask your client to pause and reflect.

- What did your challenges teach you?
- How did you grow?
- What would your future self say you've learned from the challenge you're experiencing today?



Investing in the Future

Investing in the Future

Introduction to investing in the future

Help your clients leverage the power of visualization by investing in the future.

Let's invoke the marshmallow experiment again. To help your client say no to the present-moment marshmallow, help them clarify what their metaphorical second marshmallow is. This is what makes postponing the first marshmallow worth it.

Especially at the start of the coaching relationship, your client will need to believe—and remember when it counts—that: "*well-being tomorrow will feel better than _____ would today.*"

You might start the conversation by discussing future self-continuity.

Future self continuity

Some clients favor the present. Others lean into the future.

A large body of research has demonstrated that future self-continuity has important implications regarding your clients' capacity for delayed gratification.

Future self-continuity: Future self-continuity refers to the degree of perceived connectedness between one's present self and future self.

We all have a slightly different orientation to time. While some people are more goal-oriented toward the future, others may be wired for a more immediate payoff. Their orientation has important implications regarding their capacity for delayed gratification—which impacts every major decision they make.

High future self-continuity – People who are positively oriented toward the future show a stronger ability to delay gratification. These people possess high future self-continuity.

Brain imaging studies show that when those with high future self-continuity think about themselves in the future, the same area of the brain lights up as when they're thinking about themselves in the present.

Low future self-continuity – When people with lower future self-continuity imagine enjoying a future experience, the brain areas associated with thinking about themselves are surprisingly unengaged. It's as if they're thinking about a stranger.

Research also shows that people with low future self-continuity make worse financial decisions and behave less ethically in business roleplay scenarios—while those with high future self-continuity are more likely to save money, make ethical business decisions, and build a bright financial future.

The less active your brain's self-reflection system is when you contemplate your own future self, the more likely you are to forget what you want in the long-term—opting instead to indulge in immediate gratification.

Use the soul questions that we ask before each Primordial Sound meditation to help your clients contemplate their future self.

- Who am I?
- What do I want?
- What is my purpose?
- What am I grateful for?

With a strong connection to their well-being vision, your client is more likely to resist immediate temptation and stick to their **long-term intentions**.

Waiting for the perfect future

What if your client regularly postpones present-moment fulfillment—to wait for a future ideal?

Previously, you learned about the importance of delayed gratification—an essential skill for achieving long-term spiritual fulfillment. But some clients may go too far, postponing present-moment fulfillment altogether in service of a perfect future that may never come.

A pattern of postponing fulfillment puts us into a chronic state of desire, wanting something in the future that doesn't already exist. This can keep your client in a cycle of seeking but never finding.

This pattern has the qualia of craving, longing, and incompleteness. But the idea that fulfillment can only be found when the conditions of life have changed is an illusion.

It's important to listen for signs that your client's desires might be unhealthy. It's fairly easy to identify certain unhealthy ego desires. However, it's much more common—and may require listening—to notice when a client is stuck in a pattern of postponing present-moment fulfillment for some imagined material outcome in the future.

Listen for the signs that your client is focusing on unhealthy ego desires.

- *"If I could just find my soulmate, then I could be happy."*
- *"If I could lose weight and keep it off, then I could find contentment."*
- *"If I could heal my physical ailments, then I could love my body and myself."*

Your client is perfectly sane to want these things, and of course you want them for your client. But if they're clinging to an idea that fulfillment can **only** be found when the conditions of life have changed, they are missing out on experiencing inner joy and fulfillment.

Vision vs. visualization

Vision and visualization are both important when coaching intention.

Though they share a root word, there's a distinction between a vision and a visualization.

- A vision is of an end product.
- A visualization, on the other hand, is of all the steps in the process toward achieving that vision.

According to goal researcher Heidi Grant Halvorson, it's imperative to imagine every step of the process toward success—including the challenges you'll overcome on the way.

This type of mental rehearsal is encouraged by sports psychologists and routinely used by high-level athletes. For example, legendary golfer Arnold Palmer used to prepare for an important golf round by lying down in his hotel room the night before and visualizing each shot he intended to make.

If you plan to run a marathon and only visualize yourself crossing the finish line, you miss a lot along the way. You must also envision all the steps it will take to run the race—including obstacles you might face, strategies you'll develop, and hard choices you'll make along the way.

So while your client might enjoy visualizing themselves on a romantic beach in Bali with their new soulmate, this will be less productive than visualizing themselves with the resilience to go on dozens of dates, patiently waiting to find their perfect match.

The science of visualization

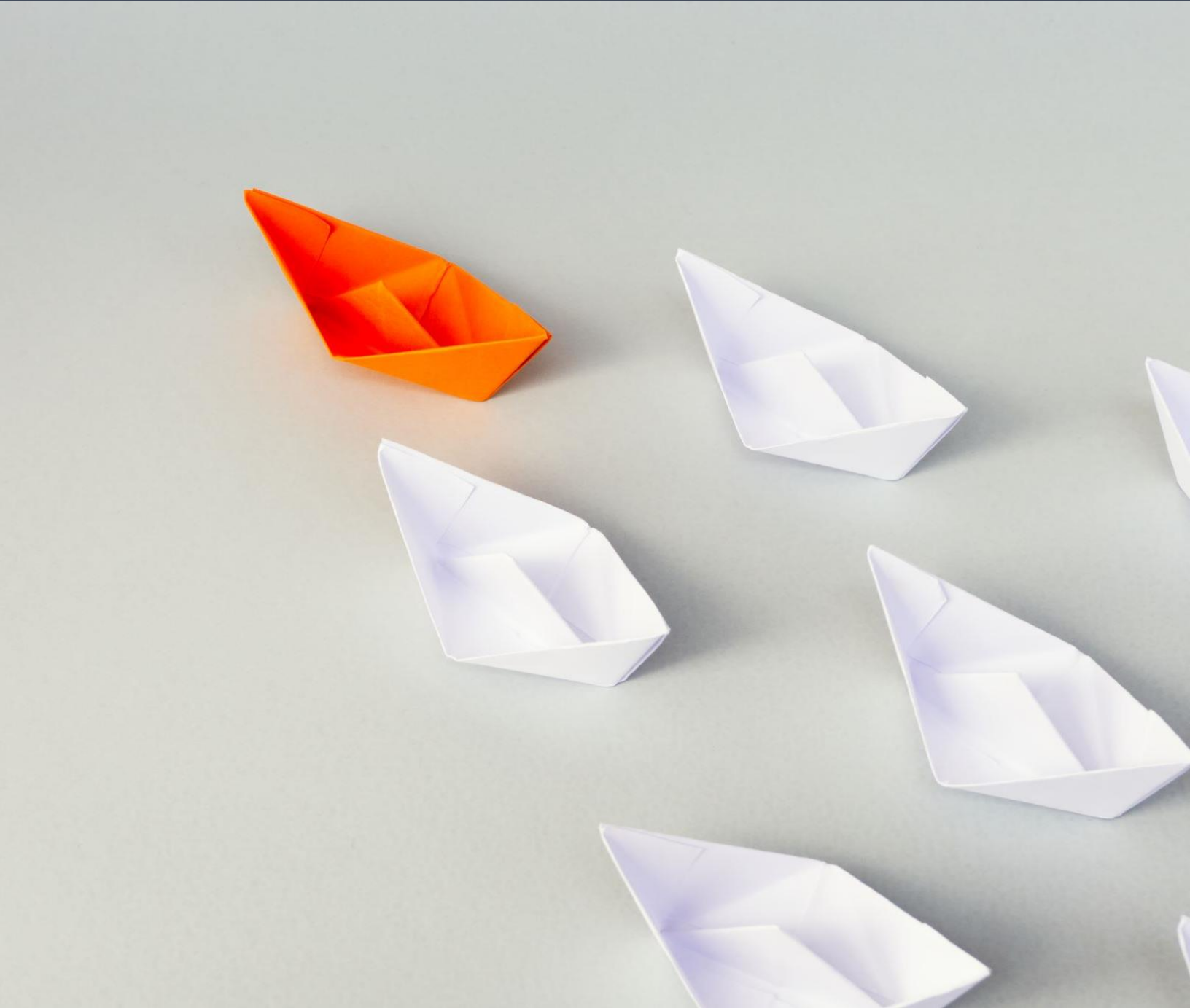
The efficacy of visualization is well documented.

Brain studies reveal that thoughts produce the same mental instructions as actions. Mental imagery impacts cognitive processes including motor control, attention, perception, planning, and memory. So the brain is getting trained for actual performance during visualization.

In some cases, research has revealed that mental practices are almost effective as true physical practice. It's also been found that mental practices can:

- Enhance motivation
- Increase confidence and self-efficacy
- Improve motor performance
- Prime the brain for success
- Increase states of flow

When a client is having trouble identifying the steps toward achieving their vision, you might consider guiding them in a visualization.



Guiding Visualizations

Guiding Visualizations

Best day visualization

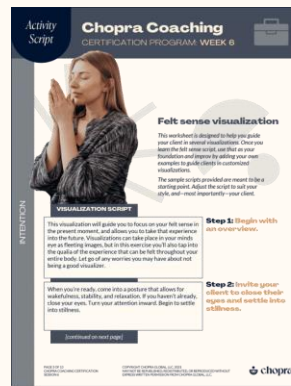
Learn how to guide your clients through a visualization of living their best day.

First, get comfortable guiding the felt-sense visualization. You'll want to focus on the first five steps. Then, use your intention improv skills to guide your clients to visualize living their ideal day.

Before you begin the guided visualization, let your client know that you'll be guiding them through a short best day visualization. Explain that after the visualization, you'll talk about their experiences and help them set goals and create an action plan.

Step 1: Begin with the first five steps of the felt sense visualization.

- Begin with an overview.
- Invite your client to close their eyes and settle into stillness.
- Ask them to bring their awareness to the breath.
- Allow them to explore physical sensations in the body.
- Give them permission to open mind-body-spirit.



BEST DAY SCRIPT

Step 2: Guide them to visualize the start of a new day.

Visualize beginning to wake up to a brand new day. Become aware of the first impulse of waking up. Feel any sensations in the body. Notice your energy level.

BEST DAY SCRIPT

Step 3: Ask them to visualize their morning routine.

Notice the time on the clock. What's your ideal time to wake up and start your day? See yourself stretching and looking forward to moving into your day. See yourself getting out of bed and beginning your morning routine. What practices or rituals do you see yourself doing? Take time for your ideal breakfast. What are you eating and drinking?

Step 4: Lead them into the day’s activities.

BEST DAY SCRIPT

Notice your mood and emotions throughout the day. How are you feeling? See yourself living your dharma today. What are you most proud of? Imagine connecting with people who support and love you. Who are you with? What kinds of conversations are you having? As the day passes, what is your relationship with time?

Step 5: Guide them into a relaxing evening.

BEST DAY SCRIPT

If you haven’t already spent time doing fun or relaxing activities, what do you see yourself doing for fun?

Step 6: Ask them to reflect back on the day.

BEST DAY SCRIPT

Reflect back on this day well lived. See yourself starting to relax and unwind. How will you end the day? See yourself engaging in your evening self-care routine? Notice how you’re feeling. Connect with the felt sense of this best day. Allow the feelings to wash over you.

Step 7: Slowly guide your client back into activity.

BEST DAY SCRIPT

Release the feelings. Take a few deeper than normal breaths. Begin to bring your awareness back into the room. When you feel ready, please gently open your eyes.

Worst day visualization

What's the worst that could happen?

In the best day visualization, your client walks through a day in which everything goes perfectly. But there’s also value in visualizing a day in which everything goes wrong—yet your client keeps their composure and responds skillfully to challenges.

This practice is most useful when a client is anticipating a specific challenge in the near future, like a holiday with challenging family members or a long and arduous business trip.

Guide your clients through a visualization of living their worst day.

You'll want to begin the same first five steps of the felt-sense visualization. Then, use your intention improvement skills to help your client visualize a challenging scenario. You may ask your client to verbalize—out loud—what they see themselves doing throughout the visualization.

Before you begin the worst day guided visualization, let your client know that they are in a safe space. You can tell them that it's OK to open their eyes during the visualization, if they experience discomfort. Explain that after the visualization, you'll talk ask follow-up questions to expand on their experiences and help them create problem-solving strategies.

Step 1: Begin with the first five steps of the felt sense visualization.

- Begin with an overview.
- Invite your client to close their eyes and settle into stillness.
- Ask them to bring their awareness to the breath.
- Allow them to explore physical sensations in the body.
- Give them permission to open mind-body-spirit.



Step 2: Guide them to visualize a worst day scenario.

WORST DAY SCRIPT

Bring to mind a challenging event or obstacle that you are currently facing or anticipate you will be facing in the upcoming week. This may be a specific event, general feeling, or first impulse that comes to you.

Step 3: Ask them to visualize the events of the day.

Advise your client to be careful of picking apart the events, or trying to come up with a solution. Rather, tune into the overall experience and emotion. With awareness of how this feels, invite your client to offer self-compassion.

WORST DAY SCRIPT

Visualize yourself approaching this obstacle, uncomfortable situation, or challenge. See specific events begin to play out in your mind. As the event unfolds, notice how you are feeling. What physical sensations are you experiencing? What emotions are coming up for you? Notice the thoughts that are arising.

Step 4: Guide them to become aware of the breath.

WORST DAY SCRIPT

Shift your awareness to your heart center, or the center of your chest. Be aware of the breath here. As your awareness shifts to the breath notice a sense of calm wash over you.

Step 5: Invite them witness a new state of being.

Ask your clients to see themselves responding and overcoming the challenge in as much detail as possible. You may want to guide them through the five senses to bring the visualization to life. For example:

- Listen to the sounds of success.
- Notice the feeling of your clothes or the air on your skin.
- See the objects around you.
- Notice if you recognize a taste or sensation in your mouth.
- Take in any smell or scents.

WORST DAY SCRIPT

From this place of centered calm, create a new vision of success. Call on your Archetype and visualize yourself responding to the challenge from a place of wisdom. See yourself taking small and specific actions to guide you toward success. Notice as many details as possible about what you're doing and feeling to create a positive outcome.

Step 6: Encourage them to celebrate success.

See yourself coming through the other side of this situation. Notice the gifts of this experience. How will you celebrate or honor your success? Stay with the experience of this celebration. Allow positive feelings to wash over you during this time of celebration.

WORST DAY SCRIPT

See yourself coming through the other side of this situation. Notice the gifts of this experience. How will you celebrate or honor your success? Stay with the experience of this celebration. Allow positive feelings to wash over you during this time of celebration.

Step 7: Slowly guide your client back into activity.

WORST DAY SCRIPT

Release the feelings. Take a few deeper than normal breaths. Begin to bring your awareness back into the room. When you feel ready, please gently open your eyes.

Negative visualization

Learn to tap into the stoic art of negative visualization.

Negative visualization is a technique that dates back many thousands of years. While most visualizations are a projection of success and resilience, visualizing worst-case scenarios—in which your client imagines losing everything they value, including life—can often be beneficial.

Negative visualizations are meant to create resilience. At the same time, they magnify gratitude for what your clients already have.

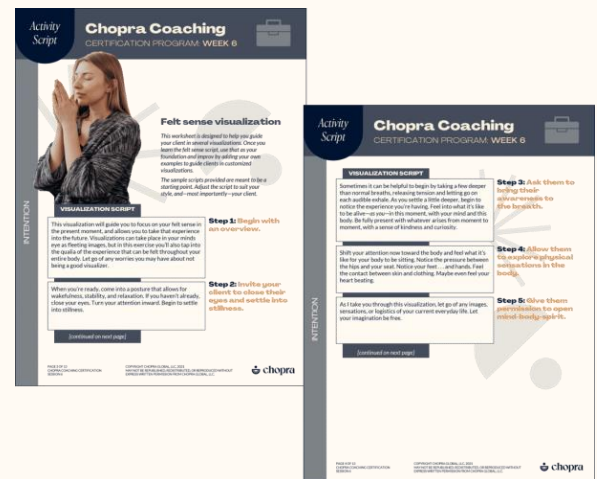
Guide your clients through a negative visualization.

The negative visualization begins with the same first five steps of the felt sense visualization. Then, you'll lead your ask your client to bring to mind a painful experience that ultimately leads them to a greater sense of self-discovery about their intention and true, essential nature.

Before you begin the negative visualization, let your client know that you've created a safe space for them to visualize. Let them know it's OK to pause and open their eyes if they experience discomfort. Explain that after the visualization, you'll talk ask follow-up questions to expand on their experiences.

Step 1: Begin with the first five steps of the felt sense visualization.

- Begin with an overview.
- Invite your client to close their eyes and settle into stillness.
- Ask them to bring their awareness to the breath.
- Allow them to explore physical sensations in the body.
- Give them permission to open mind-body-spirit.



NEGATIVE VISUALIZATION

Step 2: Ask them to bring to mind a painful experience.

Visualize a negative outcome to the intention that you've set. You may have given into temptation, procrastination, or fallen off track. Maybe an unexpected event left you feeling emotionally exhausted, overwhelmed, or deflated. Imagine this negative outcome playing out in your mind's eye.

Step 3: Guide them to visualize the end of the experience.

Pause for 2-minutes to give your client time to experience what it's like to experience their true, essential nature in the midst of pain or suffering. This has the power to bring your client a great sense of relief.

NEGATIVE VISUALIZATION

Notice that this experience has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In your mind's eye, fast forward through the experience and see yourself witnessing each event with stability and spacious presence. Imagine you have arrived at the end with grace and acceptance.

Step 4: Slowly guide your client back into activity.

NEGATIVE VISUALIZATION

Release the feelings. Take a few deeper than normal breaths. Begin to bring your awareness back into the room. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes.

Funeral visualization

Knowledge of death can be a teacher for clients to expand gratitude and appreciation.

Biologist Ajit Varki discusses how knowledge of death and mortality has the power to increase the capacity to picture a brighter future. If life is perceived as infinite in this incarnation, it's unlikely that your client will place a high value on time. The devaluation of time ultimately leads to living less fully.

Negative visualization can help your clients picture a positive future. Because if they understand that life will someday end, they're much more likely to treat time as their most prized possession.

Treat time as gold, rather than limitless grains of sands washed up on the ocean's beaches.

If your client is ready to ponder their true nature and mortality more deeply, try The Funeral Exercise.

Personal and business development expert Steven Covey introduced an activity he describes as "The Funeral Exercise."

The funeral exercise is a visualization that begins with the end in mind. It involves inviting your client to imagine their own funeral to determine how they want to live the rest of their life.

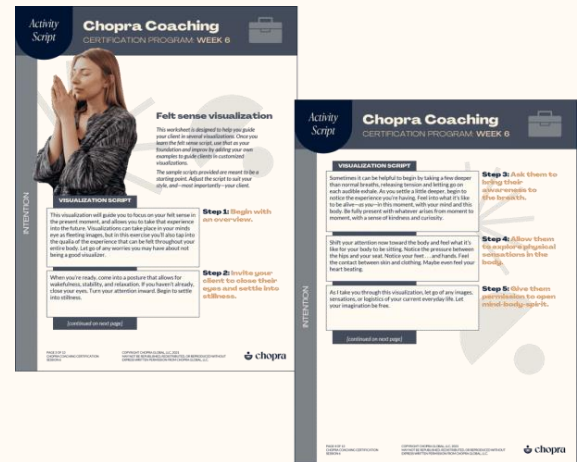
Guide your clients through a funeral visualization.

Begin the funeral visualization with the foundational first five steps of the felt sense visualization. Then, you'll continue to guide your client through activities they traditionally experience after the loss of a loved one. Modify the script to customize to your client.

Before you begin, let your client know that you'll be guiding them through a funeral visualization exercise. Ask them to listen and follow along with your instructions. Let them know that after the visualization, you'll ask them questions to reflect on their experiences.

Step 1: Begin with the first five steps of the felt sense visualization.

- Begin with an overview.
- Invite your client to close their eyes and settle into stillness.
- Ask them to bring their awareness to the breath.
- Allow them to explore physical sensations in the body.
- Give them permission to open mind-body-spirit.



FUNERAL SCRIPT

Step 2: Ask them to visualize a funeral scenario.

Visualize traveling to the funeral of a loved one. As you get closer, see the building. In your mind's eye, see yourself walking into the service. You may smell the scent of flowers. You notice faces of friends and family. You see an open casket and walk toward it. You approach the casket and look down. In this moment, you have come face-to-face with yourself laying in the casket.

FUNERAL SCRIPT

Step 3: Guide them to notice the people at the funeral.

Visualize each person in the room that has come to honor you. They are here to express how much they loved you and appreciated having you in their life. Listen to the speakers, what are they saying about you and your life? What are the qualities and characteristics they most admire in you? What contributions, achievements, and stories are people telling each other that you remember most fondly? What are they saying about the difference you made in their lives? Do you hear anyone describing the legacy you left on the world?

Step 4: Ask them to reflect on their essential nature.

You may want to point your client toward their absolute purpose. This is the part of them that never changes.

FUNERAL SCRIPT

Notice the part of you that is still and silent. This is your true self—the part of you that never changes. Notice who you really are—even when you have an injury or illness. Who are you without the relationship, finances, business, or material possessions? Notice what it feels like to go through the painful experiences of life and still remember your true nature.

Step 5: Slowly guide your client back into activity.

FUNERAL SCRIPT

Release the feelings. Take a few deeper than normal breaths. Begin to bring your awareness back into the room. When you feel ready, gently open your eyes.

After you have guided your client out of the visualization, ask coaching questions.

- What insight did you gain about how you want to live the rest of your life?
- What well-being vision do you want to create for yourself?
- What insights do you have about your legacy?
- What habits would you like to change or form in your life?
- What are the key relationships you would like to cultivate?
- What will you do differently to create the life of your dreams?



Coaching Commitment

Coaching Commitment

Introduction to coaching commitment

Commitment is much bigger than a choice.

Your client will choose between salad and pasta, but they'll commit to a vision of well-being, an action plan, and a spiritual practice that will change them forever.

Commitment puts more at stake--and creates more possibilities.

Sometimes, it's appropriate to make a bold request, *"Will you fully commit to what you're saying you want?"*

When you ask this yes/no question, a line is drawn between the known and the unknown. You're asking your client to step into unknown territory: a new way of operating in the world and finding their true self. This should be an intense, jump-off-the-couch kind of moment in which the client realizes the full implications of their commitment.

Coaching commitment

Coach commitment in five quick steps.

1. Pose powerful questions

- How committed are you to your future self?
- As a percentage from 1 to 100, what is your commitment to your intention?
- What is your level of commitment to the lifestyle plan you've created?
- Describe your personal commitment to move forward in your life with intention?

2. Ask your client to repeat their commitment

- How can you best summarize exactly what you're committing to?
- How can you announce your commitment with the energy of your archetype's special powers?
- What I hear you committing to is _____. How accurate is this statement

3. Ask your client to check in with their body's resonance

- What did it feel like to hear me say your commitment?
- What does it feel like in your body as you make this commitment?
- Where in your body do you feel resonance?
- Is there anywhere in your body that doesn't feel resonance?
- Is there a particular movement or yoga pose that best expresses this commitment?

4. Encourage your client to check in with their mind

What thoughts or doubts—if any—might you be having that you won't follow through on your commitment?

- On a scale of 1–10, where 1 means very little confidence and 10 means complete confidence, how confident are you that you’ll keep this promise to yourself?
- What’s between here and reaching the next higher number on the scale?

5. Co-create a ritual for commitment

To strengthen the embodiment of a commitment, you and your client can co-create a commitment ritual. Here are some ideas:

- Suggest that your client make a real or imaginary line on the floor. As they look at the line, tell them, “Once you cross this line, there’s no returning to where you were. State your commitment out loud as you step over it.”
- Symbolize the new commitment by asking your client to stand on their chair and jump off into the unknown.
- Write and sign a letter of commitment. Put it up where friends or family can see it.
- Use a pen or marker to write a symbol or commitment statement on their body—a temporarily tattoo of sorts.
- Have them make a ring from a paperclip. Make a personal vow as they slip the paperclip ring onto their finger. Keep the paperclip in sight on a daily basis.

When your client verbalizes their commitment, they're making a declaration.

When your client takes an action to ritualize their commitment, they make a personal vow and enact a sacred contract with themselves. It becomes a declaration of who they are becoming and an announcement of what they promise to do.

Commitment is also a sacred contract between you, the Chopra Coach, and your client. It’s part of the spiritual relationship in which you pledge to always remember the essence of who your client really is—and remind them of this truth.

Make a commitment to your client

Commitment is a two way street.

You—as the coach—are also making a commitment to your client. Your commitment may be tested throughout the relationship. Let's look at an example.

For example, what do you do when a client has prioritized their commitment to spend more time with family? And then—just weeks into coaching—wants to discuss an exciting new job opportunity that will require lots of travel? You might be equally excited about the opportunity, but it’s your job to remind your client of their commitment. Use coaching questions to let the client come to their own conclusion about the job, the benefits, and how it will impact time with their family.

Ultimately, you must trust the direction that your client chooses. Then, adjust to their priorities. But not before testing and challenging the new direction.

Be an advocate for your client's original commitment until there's no doubt they're choosing something different.

Use the coaching skills of presence and questions to give the client an opportunity to validate the new direction. They will intuitively know if it's in harmony with their soul's highest purpose.

Then, you may shift your commitment to their new one.

This is part of your commitment to hold your clients accountable to their intentions—and to their future selves.

Check in on your clients' commitments

Each week, you'll want to check in with your client to inquire about the commitments they've made.

It's standard to check in with your client toward the beginning of each coaching session. It's a good time to establish cohesion between sessions, close the loop from one week to the next, and reflect back to clients how they're relating to their commitments.

Ask questions to account for what happened since the last coaching session.

- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- What happened?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What would you do the same next time?



Coaching Accountability and Social Support

Coaching Accountability and Social Support

Coaching accountability

Whether a client did or didn't fulfill their commitments, your role is always the same.

Respond with curiosity and non-judgment, whether or not your client followed through on their commitments.

- If they succeed one week, ask them what worked well. Encourage them to continue building on the momentum.
- If they didn't follow through another week, ask them what came up. Find out how they dealt with the challenges and what they'd like to do differently next time.

Coaching accountability is different from that given by parents, spouses, friends, or colleagues; as a coach, you aren't attached to the client's outcome. Because your client's results don't impact you like they would someone in their personal life, you're in a unique position to offer non-judgmental accountability without nagging, pestering, or harassing them.

Many strategies can help you hold clients accountable, but ultimately, accountability is implicit in the spiritual relationship.

Knowing that each week you will ask them, "So, how did it go?" can be a powerful motivator for clients struggling to honor their commitments.

Of course, no matter how invested you feel in a client's success, it's important to set boundaries.

Accountability support

The level of accountability support you offer clients between sessions depends on your personal boundaries.

There's no right or wrong amount of support you give your clients. Just what's right for you.

You may choose to offer email or text support, or you might just have an accountability conversation during each session.

Ask yourself, What level of communication am I comfortable with? As you reflect on the level of support you give clients, think about the present and the future of the relationship. For example, you may be comfortable with unlimited communication now, but ask yourself, Is this level of accountability support sustainable for the duration of the relationship?

Here are some examples of text or email boundaries you can set. You might:

1. Stipulate that you'll respond to messages within a specific period of time.
2. Suggest that the client can email once a week on a certain day.
3. Have an understanding that you may or may not respond to messages, but you will review them before each session.

Start a conversation with your cohort group about boundary setting best practices and find out what's working for them.

Ongoing support can also be a value add to your coaching contract or an add-on feature provided for an extra charge. You might have an accountability policy for all your clients, or you might tailor it based on your clients' individual needs, dosha types, or intentions.

Regardless, accountability coaching isn't limited to the start of a session or a midweek email—it can also be done at the end of a session.

Design accountability with some basic questions.

- *When will you do this?*
- *Look at your calendar now. When can you schedule time to do this?*
- *How will you know you've been successful?*
- *How would you like me to hold you accountable this week?*
- *Will you email or text me to let me know you've completed this?*
- *How will you celebrate or reward yourself for following through?*

Of course, you don't have to be the only one holding a client accountable to their commitments. When it comes to achieving significant growth, your client's friends and family can be their greatest asset—or their biggest hurdle.

Social support

The phrase “we are all one” can be understood from two levels—the spiritual and the psychological.

The spiritual understanding can be summarized in the word *namaste*.

One of the most common translations of *namaste* is "the divine light in me bows to the divine light within you."

From a relative, psychological perspective, we can say that our individual sense of self isn't just connected to and influenced by others—it's also created by the beliefs and behaviors of the people closest to us.

The pull of social circles

Social support or social sabotage?

Your client's peer group is likely their most powerful source of motivation—or sabotage. Social circles have a center of gravity that can pull your clients away from their intentions, back to old patterns and habits.

It's your job to help your client identify who may distract them from their vision—and who will support and encourage them. Once you've identified people who may negatively impact their action plan, help your client create if/then statements as part of their contingency plan.

Then, you can create accountability around positive people who will support your client between coaching sessions.

Social support: Help your client design and enroll a personal support team.

Enrollment is an intentional conversation your client will want to have with a friend or family member. Help them get comfortable sharing their new vision, purpose, intentions, and commitments.

Help your client understand that the commitments are solely theirs, but asking for social support creates accountability and makes the journey more fun.

Enroll a support team

Your clients' support team is ready to cheer them on.

Coach your clients how to build a support team.

1. **Ask them to make a list.** Instructions for your client: Begin by asking your client to make a list of people who support them and others who might distract them.
2. **Invite them to reflect.** Instructions for your client: Reflect on what support looks like, Tell them to get as specific as possible about the requests they'd like to make.
3. **Advise them to select 1-3 people.** Instructions for your client: Ask them to select 1-3 people on the list that they'd like to invite to be on their support team.
4. **Pose questions.** Instructions for your client: Ask questions to help your client decide when, where, and how they'll communicate these things with their support team.
5. **Suggest that they reach out.** Instructions for your client: Suggest that your clients schedule time to reach out to a person or people on their list. Ask them to have a conversation about what they want and need around accountability and support.

People are fantastic support structures, especially for extroverts. But plenty of other support structures and technological advances can hack habit formation, track progress, encourage productivity, and help hold your clients accountable.

Need help tracking your progress? Your Chopra Coaching community may be able to help. Post a question in the community forums.

Tracking progress

Encourage your clients to get friendly with reminders, anchors, and tracking systems.

Your client doesn't have to be tech savvy to set up an intention tracking system. A good old fashioned calendar or journal can do the trick. The key is to support your clients to set up a system that gives them visual cues and feedback on their progress.

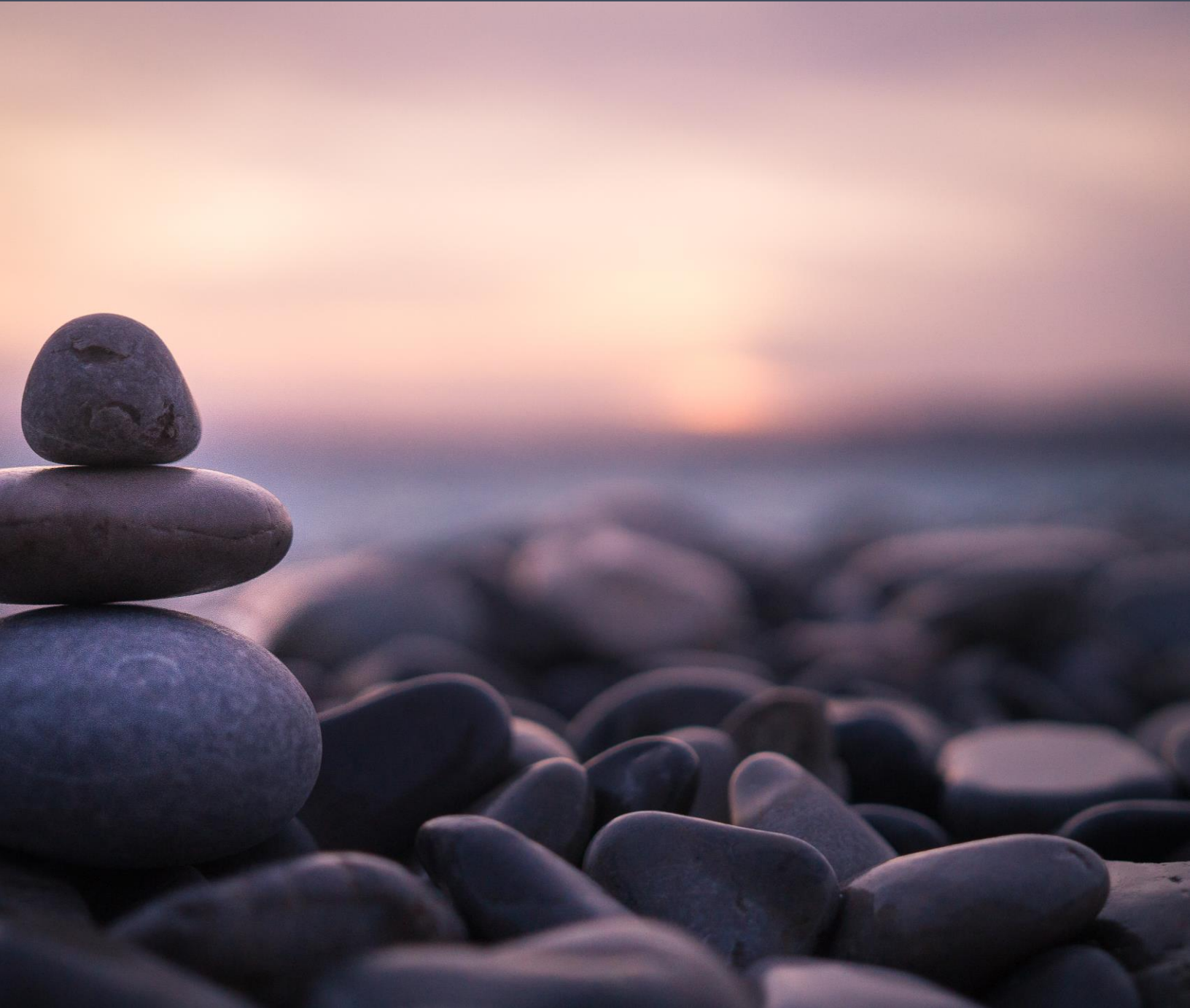
Smart phone devices, apps, and classic list trackers are just a few of many support structures that provide encouragement, insight, and motivation.

Today, tons of technology resources exist for tracking progress toward goals. Apps, smart devices, online programs, and more have made it possible to track your diet, exercise, spending, mood, and more.

Depending on your client and their goals, there's almost certainly a way to hack—and track—their progress.

You might even encourage your client to choose a symbol of their intention—such as a small rock from their garden, a seashell, a statue, or anything else—that they can place on their desk or altar. The magic comes from ritualizing the infusion of intention into the symbol. Every time they see it, they'll be reminded of their commitment.

If one of your goals is to develop a meditation practice, the Chopra app can help!



Intention Home Practices

Intention Home Practices

Home practices are where your client is going to do the "real work".

The home will help your clients honor their intentions, stick with their goals, and move closer to their well-being vision.

Remember to consider your client's personality, interests, and natural doshic tendencies as you introduce these home practices—keeping in mind what's most effective for them.

Here are a few gratitude practices you can introduce to your client.

1. Gratitude list

What it's for: Embracing the qualia of gratitude

Instructions for your client: Begin by writing down 10 things for which you're grateful. These can be small and insignificant things you usually overlook. They might be people, places, things, feelings, or states of mind.

For example, maybe you feel grateful for the warm shower you took this morning, the cold pillow you slept on last night, the lack of traffic on today's commute, or the crunchy lettuce in your burrito. Maybe you're thankful for less concrete things, too—like compassion, love, acceptance, and peace.

2. Gratitude meditation

What it's for: Expanding gratitude awareness

Instructions for your client: Begin by having your gratitude list handy. Connect with the sensations of your body breathing. When you're ready, read your gratitude list—one line at a time. Spend a few moments savoring each item.

Watch the thoughts, images, emotions, and feelings that come up as you reflect. Allow feelings of gratitude to wash over you. Savor the emotion.

If you don't feel anything warm or fuzzy, that's OK—you can't force a feeling. Gratitude is a muscle, and the intention or desire to develop it has value on its own.

3. Gratitude letter

What it's for: Gratitude reflection and reconnection

Instructions for your client: Take a moment to think back over the past several years of your life. Remember when someone did something for you for which you're still extremely grateful.

Think of the people who have been especially kind to you but have never heard you express your gratitude.

Now, write a letter to one of these people. Describe specifically why you're grateful to them, and how their behavior or choices have positively affected your life. Describe what you're doing now—and how often you remember their efforts.

You may send the letter if you'd like, but you'll receive the well-being benefits regardless.

4. Three good things

What it's for: Increase gratitude and subjective well-being

Instructions for your client: Begin by looking back on your day and think of three things that went well. Write these down. Reflect on why they went well.

This home practice, recommended by positive psychology pioneer Martin Seligman, is scientifically to increase optimism and overall well-being after one month of practice.

Better yet, co-create a home practice.

During the coaching conversations, you may uncover a creative idea for a home practice that's not on this list. Your client may also have creative and spontaneous ideas to create their own home practices. Some of the best ideas are the ones that your clients come up with. Use coaching questions to uncover new practices. Then, add them to your growing library of intention home practices you can offer clients.



PART 3

Coaching Meaning

Coaching Meaning

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What is Meaning?

What is Meaning?

Meaning is not the objective truth.

We often fool ourselves into thinking that our version of events is the objective truth, but in reality, our version of the truth is heavily influenced by our own perspective. Imagine two people standing on either end of a painted number on the ground. One person, viewing the number from a certain direction, sees the number as 6. The other person, viewing the number from the opposite direction, sees the number 9. Furthermore, the painter who placed the number on the ground had an intention to paint one or the other.

In this simplified scenario, there are theoretically only two conclusions the viewer could make: 6 or 9, and there is ultimately a "correct" perspective that aligns with the painter's intention. But in life, there are an infinite number of possible perceptions to any given event, and it's very rare that any of these perceptions are actually a full and complete story of the objective truth.

To see the objective truth, you'd need to be able to study an event from every angle—including through the eyes and experiences of each individual involved.

Meaning is a form of perspective.

Over time, our brains have evolved to form connections and draw conclusions based on experiences we've had in the past. This has historically helped us to make quick decisions without the need to fully analyze every aspect of a situation. If a bear is running toward us in the woods, we don't pause to consider the situation from the bear's perspective. Are they simply enjoying a mid-morning run? Are they going to give me a big bear hug? Are they hungry and looking for food? Does their need for sustenance outweigh our need to survive?

No, we immediately assign a meaning to the event: The bear is dangerous and we need to get out of the situation as fast as we can.

In a life or death situation like a bear attack, this form of quick thinking by bypassing whatever the objective truth is and springing into action is beneficial. It can be life-saving. But the same part of our brain that has helped us survive can also trick our minds into assigning *meaning* to an event that may not necessarily be true, or may not serve our greater goals.

The Meaning cornerstone helps you infuse new meaning behind old stories—particularly the ones that limit your potential.



Meaning - Structured

Meaning —Structured

Introduction to Meaning

Your clients can create new meaning. Your clients have the unique ability to construct elaborate stories, theories, and explanations about what's happening in their world—and why.

According to neurologist Robert Burton, the human brain receives a dopamine reward for making coherent meaning out of complex events—even if the explanation is incomplete or simply wrong.

The brain doesn't only interpret present-moment experience by trying to make coherent meaning—it also seeks out data that validates preexisting beliefs. This is called confirmation bias, and it affects the way your clients experience their lives. For example...

Your clients may reflect on their childhood experiences.

- **What happened?** Maybe your client felt left out of a secret conversation as a child and now holds the belief that they don't fit in with others.
- **What's their interpretation?** They may interpret a vague facial expression as being an obvious sign of rejection—validating a lifelong story of not belonging and feeling alone.
- **What's the projection?** If they continue projecting that childhood story onto future situations, they may believe people can't be trusted. They may withdraw from others or avoid close relationships. They may continue telling a story about how people don't like them—even around people who appreciate and love them.
- **What is the unconscious programming?** Over time, they may unconsciously program the belief that they aren't good enough. They may tell a story that they could've done better if they'd tried harder—no matter how much they accomplish.

The good news is, no one is a finished product. You've started seeing the world differently, and soon you'll be helping clients see from a new perspective as well. As a coach, it's not your job to go back into your client's past to find the origin of their limiting belief. The meaning-making work is intended to address your client's challenging situations in the present moment. As a Chopra Coach well-versed in this cornerstone, you won't have to watch clients live out their self-fulfilling prophecies for long.

Conscious Evolution

The Meaning cornerstone gives you the tools to help your clients reach deep down inside and discover their potential.

As a Chopra Coach, you're helping your clients consciously evolve. Not only will you use the Meaning cornerstone to help clients explore the meaning they make of experience, you'll also help them awaken to higher levels of consciousness.

You'll witness them catching a glimpse of what's possible, and they'll be able to see where they are on the ladder of conscious evolution.

Harvard researcher and developmental psychologist Robert Kegan created a framework around meaning making. His theory on the evolution of consciousness helps us understand how humans mentally organize and interpret experiences over time.

Conscious evolution describes the way adults grow and change over the course of their lives.

Kegan's work outlines the stages of development and conscious evolution throughout our lifetimes—progressing through various stages that expand our meaning making capacity, sense of identity, and circle of compassion. He clarifies that we evolve not by what we know, but by how we know—the way we make meaning and perceive reality.

You've got big work ahead of you. As you guide your clients through the same meaning making exercise you experienced last week, you're helping them accelerate their evolutionary process—and, ultimately, contributing to the evolution of humanity.

The Tale of the Three Umpires

Meanings that appear to be black and white are really shades of gray.

Another way to illustrate the evolution of meaning making is through the tale of the three umpires. Below, we've adapted the story from the one originally told by Professor Harvey Cantril.

Note: Umpires are the referees of baseball—their job is to call the results of a pitch, among which two options are a “ball” or a “strike.”

Three umpires discuss the difficulties of calling balls and strikes on the field.

1. The first umpire confidently declares, “There are balls, and there are strikes—and I call them as they are!”
2. The second umpire, frowning his brow, insists, “No, no, no. There are balls, and there are strikes—and I call them as I see them.”
3. The third umpire shakes his head and sighs. “You know, you’re both wrong,” he says. “There are balls, and there are strikes—and they’re nothing until I call them.”

The theme of the story:

1. The first umpire believes that we perceive the material world objectively, as it actually exists.
2. The second implies that we subjectively interpret it.
3. The third suggests that we construct the world through our perception of it—that nothing exists until we perceive, label, and interpret it.

The main idea of the story is that we manifest experience—and we can even manipulate experience through the intentional shifting of perspective.

This is what the Meaning cornerstone is all about: helping your clients shift perspectives and make conscious meaning of their lives—moment by moment.



When to Coach Meaning

When to Coach Meaning

Introduction to coaching meaning making

At the core of this cornerstone is helping your clients overcome limiting beliefs—the false meanings they’ve made about themselves, others, or the world. Coaching clients on this cornerstone can help them develop new, healthier perspectives on situations and circumstances—and the motivation to address challenges.

How will I know when to teach it?

There are signs that will help you know when to coach the Meaning cornerstone. How will you know when to coach your client through the meaning making process, as opposed to using other coaching skills or discussing another cornerstone?

You can go in many different directions at any given moment during a coaching session. But it’s always important to listen for signs that coaching one skill or process might be more effective than coaching another.

The Sign to Coach the Meaning Cornerstone

Here are some of the signs that tell you that it might be time to guide your client through the meaning making process:

They make excuses.

If your client sets a powerful intention one week but shows up the next having not followed through, it might be a good time to move toward meaning making.

This isn’t always the case. For example, if they take responsibility for not following through and provide an insightful reflection on what got in their way, they’re already doing the work, and you don’t need to explore further.

But if your client gets defensive or tries to justify why following through on their intention is simply impossible, you’ll want to go deeper. An excuse almost always has some limiting belief embedded within it.

They lack confidence.

Your client lacks confidence. People come to coaching because they want to change something in their lives. They want to address a part of life that isn’t working the way they’d like. When your client lacks the confidence to get started or feels helpless around an issue, situation, or entire area of life, it’s almost certain they’re making some limited meaning.

They feel stuck.

Your client feels stuck. There will be times when your client feels bad but doesn't really understand why. They're doing all the "right" things, but something just seems off. Feeling stuck in a rut, they might end up procrastinating or avoiding potential opportunities.

When your client says they feel stuck around an intention, a situation—or in any area from the wheel of life—there could be a limiting belief driving that feeling.

They feel conflicted.

Some clients will feel conflicted. Your client might experience conflict on many levels. They might feel conflicted about choosing between two options, going in a certain direction over another, or acting on what their head knows versus what their heart feels.

Whenever you sense conflict in your client, they likely have two competing perspectives. It's your job to help them clarify each perspective and choose the one that most aligns with their purpose and intentions.

How long will it take?

Several factors can affect how long it takes your client to work through the meaning making process. These include:

- Your client's readiness to change
- How core your client's limiting belief is to their identity
- How much self-development or therapy they've done in the past
- How long they've been meditating
- Your skill in efficiently moving your client through the steps

As in any session, keep your client's needs at the forefront of your coaching. If you realize they aren't ready for the meaning making process, that's OK. Just let the coaching conversation take you and your client wherever you're meant to go.



Facilitating the Meaning Making Process

Facilitating the Meaning Making Process

You're ready to introduce the meaning making process to your client.

So, you've determined that your client could benefit from some structured Meaning coaching. Before you jump in, consider giving them a brief introduction to the meaning making process.

Before you begin, start with an overview.

First, explain that the meaning-making process starts with identifying a current situation that feels challenging for your client. Through the process, you'll help them understand the meaning they are making of the situation and the impact it's having on them. Then, you'll help them cultivate a new perspective.

Next, share the ***Meaning Worksheet*** with your client. Consider if they'd prefer to fill out the fillable copy digitally, or the printable copy with pen and paper.

Part 1: Name the Challenge

Your clients may—or may not—come to you knowing the specific situation they want to work on.

Most paying clients have at least one challenging area of life they want to address, and some may come to you with more. You'll want to help them identify one event, situation, or area of life where they feel stuck but hopeful about their ability to grow beyond it.

Suggest that your practice client selects a single challenging situation or area of life that doesn't feel traumatic or overly raw—ask them to try working with a level 6 or 7 challenge on a scale of 1 to 10. While the meaning-making process can be appropriate for many situations your clients may be facing, compassionate listening might be all you can offer for a level 10 challenge right now.

Feeling the challenge builds motivation to change.

Feeling the qualia of the challenge builds intimacy and a deeper understanding of the nature of the challenge. Once your client understands their situation, they can more easily label it. And once they can label it, they can start breaking it down.

Powerful questions will help your clients name the challenge. Here are some questions to ask:

- What is the challenge you're currently facing?
- Why is this a challenge for you?
- What does this challenge cost you?
- Why do you want to overcome this challenge?
- What is the risk of not facing this challenge?

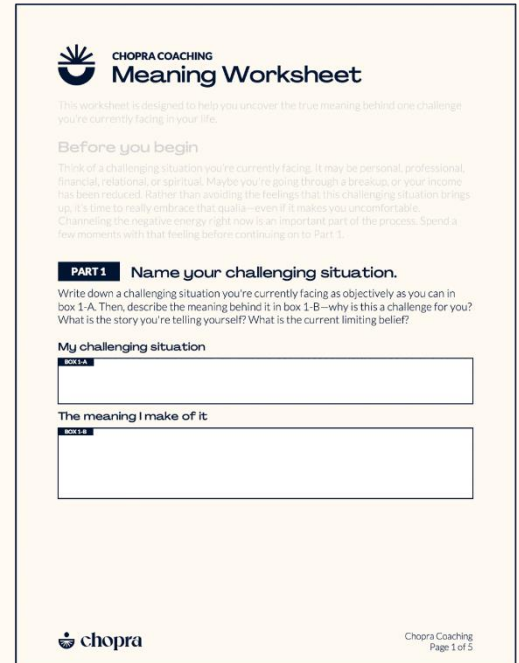
Part 1 in the Meaning Worksheet

Use or modify these instructions to begin guiding your client through the meaning making exercise.

This worksheet is designed to be completed digitally. If a client will be printing it and filling it out by hand instead, you may need to adjust the script to better explain the process so they don't need to copy text from page to page.

Using Part 1 of the *Meaning Worksheet*, write down one level 6 or level 7 challenging situation.

Then, write down the meaning behind it.



CHOPRA COACHING
Meaning Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help you uncover the true meaning behind one challenge you're currently facing in your life.

Before you begin

Think of a challenging situation you're currently facing. It may be personal, professional, financial, relational, or spiritual. Maybe you're going through a breakup, or your income has been reduced. Rather than avoiding the feelings that this challenging situation brings up, it's time to really embrace that quality—even if it makes you uncomfortable. Challenging the negative energy right now is an important part of the process. Spend a few moments with that feeling before continuing on to Part 1.

PART 1 Name your challenging situation.


Write down a challenging situation you're currently facing as objectively as you can in box 1-A. Then, describe the meaning behind it in box 1-B—why is this a challenge for you? What is the story you're telling yourself? What is the current limiting belief?

My challenging situation

BOX 1-A

The meaning I make of it

BOX 1-B

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Part 2: Evaluate its cost and benefit

Often, the true meaning lies below the surface.

Your clients may not realize that many of their limiting beliefs reside below the surface, in the subconscious mind. Through the meaning-making process, you'll begin guiding them to see a better way of making meaning that leads to greater freedom and possibility. You'll also help them understand how their choices impact actions, behaviors, and consequences linked to these limiting beliefs.

In Part 2 of the *Meaning Worksheet*, you'll help your clients take inventory and own the cost of their negative beliefs. They'll realize what an impact these beliefs have on achieving their well-being vision. This is when they access what we might call the impact zone.

Coaching the impact zone requires a gentle touch.

When your client begins to feel the impact of their limiting belief, it can feel uncomfortable. It may even elicit grief as they come to realize how they may have sacrificed relationships and opportunities in service to this belief.

When you guide your clients into the impact zone, it's important to meet them with compassion. Normalize their experience by sharing the revelations you had on your own meaning making journey. Don't let them sink too far into self-judgment. Remind them that these uncomfortable insights can serve as motivation to let go of this past pattern for good.

Ask your clients to reflect on the question, *What are you telling yourself?*

In *Part 1*, your client wrote down their challenging situation or area of life. In *Part 2*, now it's time to help them explore the stories they're telling themselves about that challenging situation or area.

Ask them to reflect on the meaning they've projected onto this situation.

Here are some questions to ask:

- What negative thoughts loop through your head around this challenge?
- How does perpetuating this story benefit you?
- How does perpetuation this story harm you?
- Is this challenge the real reason you're struggling, or is there something deeper?
- If this challenge were a chapter in your book of life, what would be the title?

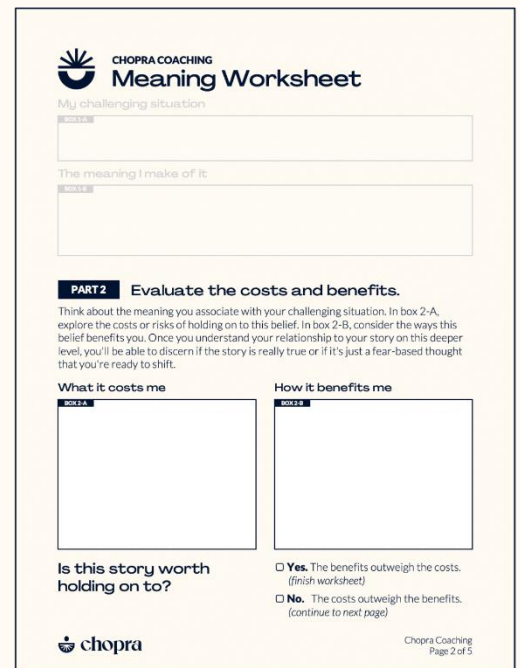
Part 2 in the Meaning Worksheet

Think about the story or meaning that you currently associate with your challenging situation.

- What is the cost of perpetuating this story?
- What is the benefit of this limiting belief?

Keep in mind, the "benefit" is usually not a *real* benefit to your soul. It's usually a way for your ego to play safe, stay small, and survive (but not *thrive*).

Next, ask yourself if you want to hold on to this story or if you're ready to let it go.



CHOPRA COACHING
Meaning Worksheet

My challenging situation

The meaning I make of it

PART 2 Evaluate the costs and benefits.

Think about the meaning you associate with your challenging situation. In box 2-A, explore the costs or risks of holding on to this belief. In box 2-B, consider the ways this belief benefits you. Once you understand your relationship to your story on this deeper level, you'll be able to discern if the story is really true or if it's just a fear-based thought that you're ready to shift.

What it costs me

How it benefits me

Is this story worth holding on to?

Yes. The benefits outweigh the costs. (finish worksheet)

No. The costs outweigh the benefits. (continue to next page)

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Part 3: Brainstorm Alternatives

Examine the meaning they've been making of the challenge.

Before jumping into the brainstorming step, encourage your client to really examine the meaning they've been making of the challenging situation so far.

Self-help guru and spiritual guide Byron Katie is famous for what she calls *The Work*—a process of self-inquiry. *The Work* helps people become aware of their limiting beliefs and takes them deeper to evaluate if those beliefs are really true. The process uses a powerful question.

Ask a question: Is this the true meaning of this story? Really? Always?

You can use this question before starting the brainstorming process. If your client believes the story is true—regardless of the reality of the situation—encourage them to sit with that meaning a little longer, until they see the full picture. At first, they may not be able to see the full truth, but with deeper reflection, sitting with the negative meaning may lead them to understand that it's not the whole truth.

At this point, they may be ready to shift. As you listen to their exploration, you may finally hear them say, "Nope, that's not the truth, and holding onto it is costing me way too much."

This is when you'll know they're ready to start brainstorming new ways of making meaning.

At this step of the process, your client is in the belief gap—or, as Deepak would say, the space of pure creation and infinite possibilities. Your client may now be able to see through their old belief, and now you get to help them create new meaning.

Part 3 of the Meaning exercise entails placing a challenge in a different context, or frame. In the brainstorming step of the meaning-making process, you'll take your client frame shopping. This will require divergent thinking—generating creative ideas by quickly exploring many solutions and drawing unexpected connections.

To prepare your client to think in this spontaneous, free-flowing way, you might guide them in a short pranayama breathing exercise, some light movement, or a meditation to help them access the present moment and get into the idea-generating zone.

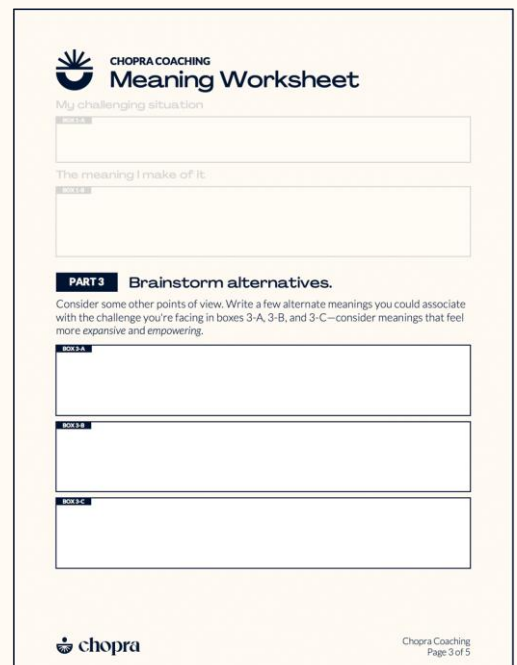
Here are some examples of creative questions to get your client's wheels turning.

- What meaning would your archetype make of this?
- What meaning would your 90-year-old self make?
- What is a more self-compassionate meaning?
- What is an optimistic or humorous meaning?
- What is the courageous, resilient meaning?
- What meaning would the universe make of this?

Part 3 in the Meaning Worksheet

Now, think of some other stories you could tell about the challenge you're facing. Write down at least three new perspectives that feel good to you.

In the next step, we'll explore each of these new meanings.



The screenshot shows a worksheet titled "CHOPRA COACHING Meaning Worksheet". It includes a section for "My challenging situation" with a text box, and "The meaning I make of it" with another text box. Below this is "PART 3 Brainstorm alternatives." with instructions: "Consider some other points of view. Write a few alternate meanings you could associate with the challenge you're facing in boxes 3-A, 3-B, and 3-C—consider meanings that feel more expansive and empowering." There are three text boxes labeled "BOX 3-A", "BOX 3-B", and "BOX 3-C" for writing. The Chopra logo and "Page 3 of 3" are at the bottom.

Use a quote to engage your client.

“No problem can be solved from the same mindset that created it. To solve the problem, we must approach it with a new mindset.” —ALBERT EINSTEIN

Part 4: Try it on

Have your client try on the new meanings they've brainstormed.

Previously, in the structured Purpose coaching session, you had your practice client try on archetypes until they found the one best suited to them. Similarly, when you coach Meaning, you'll have them try on the different perspectives they've written down.

Feeling the qualia of each meaning allows your client to tap into their intuition.

Encourage your client to meditate on the qualia of each meaning. In this part of the worksheet, you'll guide them in a modified felt sense visualization to feel the resonance in their body and trust the guidance of their intuition.

Explain that the right perspective for them will probably be the one that feels most aligned with their archetype and well-being vision.

Part 4 in the Meaning Worksheet

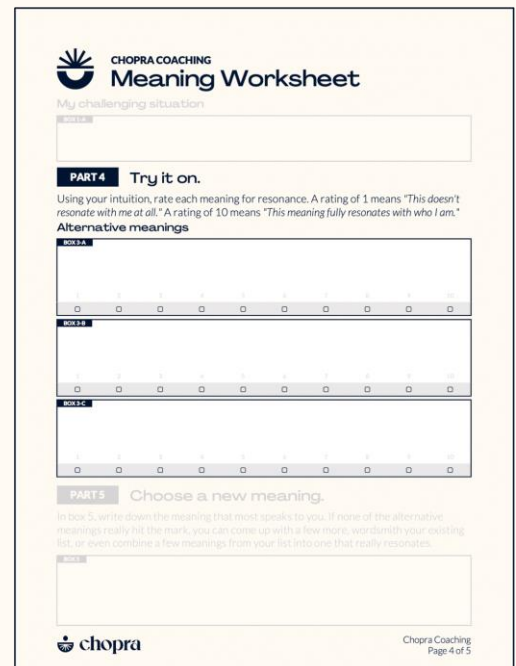
Using the checkboxes at the bottom of each new meaning on your worksheet, rate each alternative meaning. Once you've rated all the new meanings you've identified, we'll take a few minutes and feel into each one.

Try a guided visualization

I'd like to guide you in a short visualization. When you feel ready, please close your eyes. Feel into the present moment. As I say each new meaning, notice any sensations, feelings, or thoughts as they arise. Then, notice which words come to mind to label your body's felt sense experience.

Pause for one minute between each new meaning.

Now, use your intuition. On your worksheet, rate each meaning for resonance. You'll want to use the same scale that you used for the Chopra Wheel of Life activity. Use a rating of 1 when the new meaning doesn't resonate at all and a rating of 10 when the new meaning feels empowering and freeing.



Don't overthink the ratings. Lean into your intuition. We can always come back and revisit these new meanings.

Part 5: Choose a new meaning

Your client now has a menu of new meanings.

They've sampled each new meaning, feeling into which perspective is most true for them. Now, you'll help them find the one that's most aligned with their well-being vision, archetype, and intention.

This new perspective should leave your client feeling confident, motivated, and free.

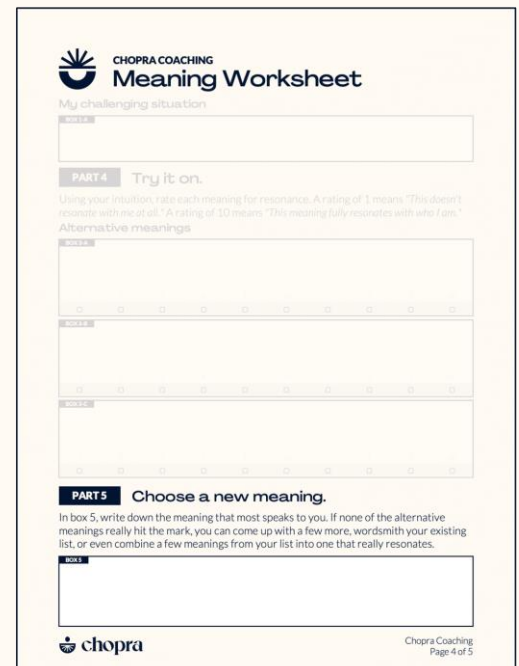
Part 5 in the Meaning Worksheet

Let's complete Part 5, Choose a new meaning, together. Tapping into your felt sense, write down the meaning that most speaks to you.

You might connect with two beliefs equally. If so, let's combine the best parts of both into one super-perspective. Or we can talk through the pros and cons of each meaning to select the one that most resonates.

Help them decide, commit, and ritualize.

If your client still can't decide, you might challenge them to live half the week from one perspective and a half from the other, journaling each day about their experience. After they've tested both beliefs for a few days, they'll know which one to choose.



Next, you can help your client solidify their commitment using the concepts you learned in Session 6, Lesson 5: Coaching Commitment. You might ask them to read their true meaning statement back to you with their archetype's energy. Or you might suggest they write it down three times, put it in their social media bios, or meditate on it each morning. Help your client celebrate and ritualize this huge choice in whatever way feels best for them.

Part 6: Create an action plan

Once your client has chosen a new meaning, you can prep them to resist old patterns.

So far, you've studied the first three cornerstones.

1. In the Purpose cornerstone, you learned the importance of integrating coaching concepts into your client's daily life.

2. In the Intention cornerstone, you learned how to help clients set themselves up for success with a detailed action plan.
3. Now in the Meaning cornerstone, you'll finish up the meaning making process by helping your client plan actions from their new perspective.

In Part 6 of the worksheet, have them write a quick action plan to solidify and build momentum around their new meaning.

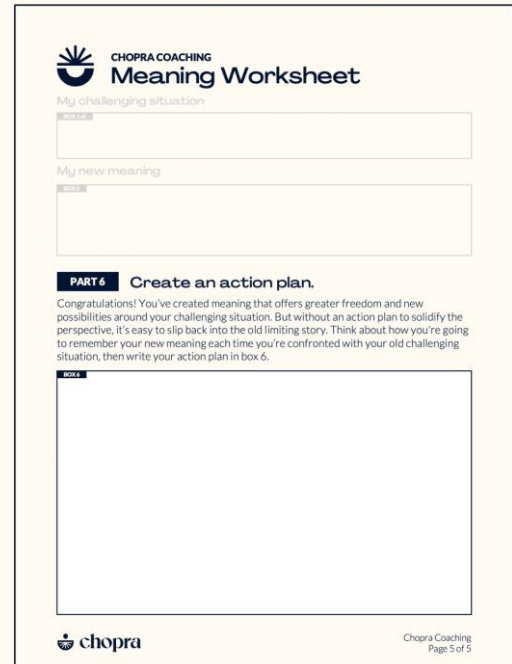
Your client's actions will typically follow their most well-established beliefs. For example, if they don't believe they're capable of disciplined effort to follow through with a plan, their actions will align and they will indeed come up short. If they believe their well-being vision is around the corner, they're more likely to take micro-actions and gain momentum toward their intentions.

Part 6 in the Meaning Worksheet

On the last page of the Meaning Worksheet, make a list of action steps you can take to overcome old perspectives that no longer serve you.

What actions will you choose from this new meaning?

What will you remind yourself of if you catch yourself slipping back into the old story?



CHOPRA COACHING
Meaning Worksheet

My challenging situation

My new meaning

PART 6 Create an action plan.

Congratulations! You've created meaning that offers greater freedom and new possibilities around your challenging situation. But without an action plan to solidify the perspective, it's easy to slip back into the old limiting story. Think about how you're going to remember your new meaning each time you're confronted with your old challenging situation, then write your action plan in box 6.

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Common Challenges of Coaching Meaning

Common Challenges of Coaching Meaning

Common Challenges

There are some challenges that could get in the way when coaching Meaning.

By now, you know a few ways to navigate the meaning making process. As with any other cornerstone, you're sure to encounter challenges when coaching clients around Meaning. At some point in your coaching career, you'll come across clients who:

- Resist resolving conflicting beliefs
- Experience meaning relapse
- Throw themselves into a new belief that's unrealistic
- Hold a personal belief that conflicts with your own
- Leave a session feeling incomplete

It's important to keep in mind that the Meaning cornerstone shifts perspective and ultimately your clients' destiny. This is breakthrough work. It doesn't always follow a tidy step-by-step process. So, you'll need a few tools in your toolbox to overcome these challenges and obstacles.

What if they resist disputing beliefs?

Generally speaking, beliefs serve your clients—until they don't anymore.

When your client's limiting beliefs were originally created, it was likely that they served, helped, or protected them in some way. While the beliefs were being formed, they served some purpose. At that time, they were relevant and true.

Beliefs are grounded in emotion and life experience. The same beliefs that served your client in childhood may lead to painful emotions later in life. When clients lose sight of how to distinguish false beliefs from true beliefs, they limit their possibilities. This can lead to suffering.

Reflect on a client's childhood experiences.

- **Childhood experiences shape beliefs.** Imagine your client at 8 years old. Their parents start fighting a lot around the time the family moves to a new school district. There's not much stability at home, but school isn't much better. Your client is too shy to make friends and starts getting bullied by other kids.
- **Teenagers carry these beliefs with them.** These childhood experiences have led your client to believe that the world is an unsafe place, they don't fit in with others, or they're simply unlikable. They carry these beliefs into adolescence.
- **Adults hold false beliefs as true.** Your client is 45 now. Life is obviously different from when they were 8. But the brain's confirmation bias led them to spend decades subconsciously seeking out evidence that supports their beliefs—while ignoring evidence that contradicts it. This bias may have also impacted their memory, favoring the recall of information that confirms their prior beliefs.

If your client demonstrates resistance to disputing their limiting belief, embrace paradox. Support your client with compassion. You may respond, "Yes, there's evidence confirming your belief—but there's also evidence that it isn't true."

Your goal is to shake the belief loose enough that your client agrees there may be another perspective worth considering. The moment your client sees even a sliver of possibility—and is willing to explore it—you've opened the door to brainstorming alternative perspectives.

But if they're holding onto their limiting belief for dear life, the best thing to do may be to let them sit with the belief—and maybe stay stuck in it for a while longer. Readiness to change is a prerequisite for transformational coaching.

Readiness can't be forced, but it can be encouraged.

Awareness of suffering, acceptance, and forgiveness are all powerful motivators for change.

Here are some practical ways you can guide clients to ready themselves for making new meaning and shifting their perspective:

- Have your client write the origin story or a biography of their limiting belief.
- Guide them into stillness. Then, invite them to repeat their limiting belief to feel its dissonance and the pain of staying stuck.
- Have them write a love letter to their limiting belief, thanking it for protecting them when they were vulnerable.

What if they fall off course?

Your clients may make great strides, then experience a setback.

It's highly likely that your client's old beliefs will reemerge at some point—after all, these beliefs have been around much longer than their new ones.

Your client is most likely to fall back on old patterns in times of stress, especially toward the beginning of their meaning making journey. During this time, their new perspective will be vulnerable. It must be carefully protected until your client has had time to fully integrate it.

You can prepare your clients to overcome meaning relapse with powerful questions.

Ask questions to cultivate mindful awareness when challenges resurface.

- What's coming up in the next few weeks that has the potential to knock you off course?
- In what situations are you least likely to remember your new perspective?
- Which people are most likely to challenge your new perspectives?

Once your client has identified potential potholes on their path, you might help them craft a contingency plan, similar to what you did in the Intention cornerstone.

What if their perspective is unrealistic?

Your clients may create an idealized perspective for themselves.

At times, a client may shift into a radically positive perspective that borders on utopian. This may seem like an improvement on their old beliefs, but indulging in fantasy isn't usually for the best.

Research shows that the best perspectives are realistic about the present while maintaining optimism about the future.

A utopian perspective will often leave a client feeling temporarily high, whereas a balanced one helps them feel grounded and capable of moving forward at a sustainable pace.

If you suspect your client's pendulum has swung too far in a new direction, you can reflect the two polar perspectives to them. Then ask, "What's in the middle?" Have them try on each of the new perspectives they created before choosing one.

When your client finds the right perspective, it will probably feel like home. They may say something like, "Ah, yes! That's what I'm talking about."

Ultimately, the new perspective is your client's choice—they'll know it when they feel it. Still, your reflection of their energy and resonance can be helpful here.

What if there's a difference in our personal beliefs?

Your clients may want to work on an issue that conflicts with your personal belief system.

Your client may choose a belief that feels incompatible with one of your own. While this may feel uncomfortable in the beginning, as a coach, it's your role to hold the truth lightly, relating to it as a great mystery. Try to approach the idea of truth with a sense of humility and openness.

This perspective will help you be a highly inclusive coach, respectfully relating to a diverse array of people. Holding the truth lightly will ensure that your beliefs don't interfere with those of your clients, and a practice of humility will help you stay grounded when a client's belief is different than yours.

It's also important to know that a client's belief can be good for them even if it's not objectively true.

What if the session is incomplete?

Limiting beliefs rarely disappear overnight. Not every coaching session will be wrapped with a pretty bow.

You may hope that at the end of the meaning making process, your client will be moved by the profound transformation you've facilitated. But that won't always be the case—and it shouldn't be your aim. Instead, your job is to honor your client's organic process and hold space for transformation at their own pace.

image of woman mid-conversation. If the session is coming up on time and your client is still defending their limiting belief, trust that they'll be OK.

Your client now has a tool to continue processing this belief. You might leave them with a journal assignment, an inquiry around what they get out of clinging to a belief that clearly hurts, or an assignment to continue looking for even a scrap of evidence that their belief isn't true.

It's amazing what can happen in a week—often, you'll find that your client arrives at your next session fully ready to shift. But if you're truly concerned about leaving them in a place that seems worse than where they started, you're welcome to check in on them during the week.



Meaning - Improv

Meaning—Improv

The Meaning Making Algorithm

The human brain is a miraculous machine that fills in gaps that we perceive in our understanding. It's an essential part of our ability to function in this world. If we tried to investigate the meaning behind every event we experienced, we would waste a lot of time—so our imaginations fill in the gaps.

Historically, uncertainty was bad for survival.

If we saw a cave, inferred that a bear might be living there, and fled—rather than going in to investigate—we had a much greater chance of survival. So, over time, we became extremely proficient at explaining life's mysteries.

The better we can understand and justify challenging events—such as breakups, business failures, losing streaks, or medical problems—the faster we can recover from them.

We filter everything that happens through our mental meaning-making algorithm, which we've subconsciously programmed over our entire lifetime.

Every experience you've ever had has programmed your meaning-making algorithm. Every failure, success, trauma, and insight. Every movie you've watched, album you've heard, and book you've read. Everything your parents, teachers, and friends have ever told you—everything your culture has taught you—about who you are and how the world works has been programming the meaning-making machine that you use every day.

As a Chopra-certified meditation teacher, you know this programming as the software of the soul.

Past actions—*karma*—create meaning out of present experiences. Using the tools of meditation and the meaning making process, you can help your clients shift out of the wheel of karma and tell a new story.

Awareness of Meaning

The Science on Awareness of Meaning

Meaning making takes place primarily at a subconscious level.

Before your client begins practicing meditation or enters the coaching relationship, their meaning making process is—for the most part—happening subconsciously. Unless they've already engaged in some kind of developmental work, many people don't recognize that their past experiences are impacting their subjective interpretation of reality.

Rather than seeing the meaning they make as one of many perspectives that could be true, they experience things happening and assume their thoughts about the situation are “just the way things are.” They're likely to

be stuck projecting past beliefs onto their present moment experience—feeling frustrated at getting the same mediocre results they’ve always gotten.

You'll begin to help your clients understand why they make certain decisions and ultimately help them overcome the frustration of getting the same results they've always gotten.

You understand this cycle as the software of the soul or the wheel of karma, but you can also explain this phenomenon through the lens of modern neuroscience.

The Default Mode Network

Most people live in a trance of subconscious meaning making.

The brain region associated with this way of being is appropriately called the default mode network. Made up of the posterior cingulate cortex and the medial pre-frontal cortex, it’s most often active when a person is not engaged in an interesting task or otherwise intentionally focusing their attention.

Default mode: The default mode is experienced as feeling lost in thought, zoned out, or on autopilot.

This default mode can also feel like being lost in a fantasy, obsessively planning for the future, or ruminating on the past. Research has revealed a correlation between a more active default mode network and higher levels of anxiety and depression.

The more your clients are caught up in unconscious meaning making, the less well-being they'll feel.

Coaching Awareness of Meaning

Notice where your clients are feeling stuck.

Most people are driven to coaching by a feeling of being stuck and unable to change on their own. They see others thriving and know well-being is possible, but they don’t recognize what’s truly holding them back: their unconscious thinking.

The first step in coaching your clients to quit the habit of unconscious meaning making is helping them develop awareness of when they’re doing it. After all, your client can’t transcend what they don’t see.

This may be a good opportunity to switch into a teacher role, bringing in some of your mindful awareness knowledge and experience.

The goal is for your client to become the silent witness of any thoughts that arise in the moment.

See if you can help your client step back and watch their own mental stories—like they would watch a movie. You might also frame the experience as listening to the voice in their head narrating each moment, like a sportscaster calling shots in the game of life.

If your client already has a consistent meditation practice, they may have already developed greater mindful awareness of their thinking. But if this isn’t the case, you can prompt them with a few reflection questions.

Ask a few prompting questions to help your clients step back and become aware of their thoughts.

- How does a thought appear in awareness?
- What is your next thought?
- Can you notice the difference between one thought that is short and quick, and another that is more like a story that sweeps you away?

Help your clients transition from awareness of their thoughts to awareness of the story they're telling themselves.

To help your clients observe this level of meaning making, start introducing topics. Instruct them to observe their thoughts about each one. Use or modify these coaching prompts to guide your clients to expand their awareness.

Ask them to think of a past experience and notice the thoughts or images that arise.

SAMPLE SCRIPT: Bring to mind a date you went on once in the past. Don't try to think—simply notice whatever appears in your mind about this date.

Coaching reflection: One reflection you might offer your client is that even before you asked them to think of this past experience, they were likely having different, random, unintentional thoughts. This prompt shifted their awareness to think of a new experience—and maybe the meaning they created around it.

Ask them to bring to mind a current experience and notice the narrative.

SAMPLE SCRIPT: Bring to mind a project you're currently engaged in. Don't try to think—simply notice the narrative that automatically arises when you introduce this project into your awareness.

Teaching moment: You may want to follow up with a mindful awareness teaching moment. Explain the difference between mindful awareness of thought and mindful awareness of story. A single thought usually comes as a flash, but a story plays out in the mind like a string of thoughts with greater energy and momentum.

This will help your client understand how easy it is to get swept up in the drama of a story.

Ask them to think about their current challenge and notice the story.

SAMPLE SCRIPT: Now, think about the current obstacle to your intention. What story comes up around this challenge?

Coaching question: Ask your client, "What's the difference between the unintentional thoughts that arose about the date, the meaning or narrative that arose around the project, and the story about your current challenge that I prompted you to intentionally think about?"

Explanatory Styles

As you know, our physiology reacts to stress with the fight-flight-freeze response.

As our bodies respond physically, our minds create stories about the meaning of the challenges we face.

Different people have different meaning making modes and styles. For instance...

1. Some people are more prone to create a simple meaning out of a situation versus a complex, more expansive meaning.
2. Some people have a relatively high tolerance for ambiguity.
3. Some people desperately try to find the meaning in everything that happens.
4. Some people often make a more optimistic meaning, as opposed to a pessimistic one.

The field of positive psychology involves the study of subjective experiences, individual traits, and institutions—with the aim of improving individual and societal well-being. In short, positive psychologists try to figure out what makes life worth living.

These psychologists call our unique meaning making capacity our explanatory style. This attribute determines whether we tend to assign negative or positive explanations to why we've experienced a particular event.

Pessimistic explanatory style:

Someone with a pessimistic explanatory style tends to make meaning about the causes of adverse events as being personal, pervasive, and permanent.

Pessimistic

PERSONAL:
"This is all my fault."

PERVASIVE:
"This affects absolutely everything."

PERMANENT:
"This can't be changed."

Challenges
are blamed
on self

Optimistic explanatory style:

Someone with an optimistic explanatory style tends to attribute challenges to acts of nature or karmic patterns. They believe such events will end soon, without impacting too many other aspects of their lives.

Optimistic

IMPERSONAL:
"This was meant to happen."

NOT PERVASIVE:
"This won't have a huge impact on my life."

IMPERMANENT:
"This will end soon."

Challenges
are acts
of nature

Your goal as a coach is to help shift your client's focus from a pessimistic explanatory style to an optimistic one.

The Optimistic Explanatory Style

Optimism strategies involve interpreting events from a more positive and charitable perspective.

Clients with an optimistic explanatory style seek the good within bad situations and identify new opportunities as others are lost.

Shifting from a pessimistic to an optimistic explanatory style requires solid coaching and commitment. But if you can help your client continue to focus on creating new meaning until the optimistic perspective becomes habitual, they'll experience immense well-being benefits.

Meaning impacts performance.

The meaning your client makes impacts not only their well-being, but also their performance. This is highlighted in research done by psychologist Martin Seligman, who asked swimmers to swim their best stroke. After finishing, he told the swimmers that their times were slightly slower than they actually were.

In the next round, swimmers with an optimistic self-explanatory style swam at approximately the same speed—but swimmers with a pessimistic self-explanatory style swam more slowly.

This illustrates how when things are going well, no difference in motivation or performance exists between optimists and pessimists. But when things are falling apart, pessimists often stop trying—while optimists persist.

Shifting the Mindset

Mindset psychologist Carol Dweck presents another lens for interpreting life's challenges.

According to Dweck, someone with a fixed mindset assumes their intelligence and talents are innate and unchangeable. But someone with a growth mindset believes they can develop their abilities over time through hard work and practice.

People with a fixed mindset shape their stories to avoid failure at all costs.

When someone has a fixed mindset, the meaning they make about their intelligence, talent, and other traits is that whatever they have now is all they'll ever have.

Your clients who have a fixed mindset may feel as though their self-worth is at risk every time they perform. This discourages them from taking risks, trying new things, and leaving their comfort zone.

People with a growth mindset see taking risks as an essential part of the process.

Someone with a growth mindset embraces challenging opportunities.

People with a growth mindset create stories that say they'll only reach their highest potential by taking risks and accepting uncertainty as part of the growth process. They believe failure is something to learn from. The goal isn't to succeed at all costs—it's to do their best and learn from the experience.

Your clients get to choose the meaning they make about their abilities.

"Mindsets are just beliefs. They're powerful beliefs, but they're just something in your mind, and you can change your mind. - Carol Dweck

Why would anyone choose a fixed mindset?

With your experience as a Chopra Meditation and Health teacher, and now as a well-being coach, you may be wondering: Why would anyone choose a fixed mindset? Why would anyone choose to be a pessimist when looking on the bright side is clearly so much better for their well-being?

But for your client, the limiting beliefs that may have led them to a pessimistic explanatory style, a position of object-referral, or a fixed mindset are all happening subconsciously.

Your client may intellectually understand that we're all constantly growing through a lifetime, or that optimism is better than pessimism. But they may still fall victim to the limitations of pessimism or a fixed mindset—especially in areas of life where they lack confidence or have experienced a string of failures or trauma. They're simply unaware of the meaning they're subconsciously making.

Fortunately, by identifying your client's explanatory style, you can help your client see the meaning they're making about their challenges—preparing them for an optimistic outlook on change.



The Mind and Body Reaction

The Mind and Body Reaction

Starting with the Mind or Body

What does it take to help a client shift toward greater optimism and a growth mindset?

How will you coach clients to upgrade their deeply ingrained meaning-making algorithms?

You've learned how to identify when your client's stuck in a limiting pattern of beliefs, then bring awareness to the meaning they're creating. But that's just the start. Now, your client must cultivate the motivation to change their perspective. Your job is to coach them toward that motivation.

Both the mind and the body play key roles in helping your client find their motivation and change their perspective. You can start with either —depending on what stories your client is telling.

- If your client “feels” stuck but doesn’t know why, begin by coaching the body.
- If they’re stuck in their head and aware of their looping thoughts but aren’t sure how they feel about the situation, start by coaching the mind.

Meaning in the Mind

The mind can expand and shift the way it thinks about something.

The context provided by the subject-object theory of development can help you guide clients in identifying and naming the limited meaning they've projected onto a challenging situation. Once they're aware of the meaning they've projected, they can begin to create new meaning.

To understand the subject-object theory of development, let's first define "subject" and "object."

Subject- characterized by interpretation: A subject is a thing we can identify with, fuse with, or project onto.

Object- characterized by action: An object is a thing we can look at, reflect on, manage, take control of, or be responsible for.

You'll help your clients identify subjective and objective experience.

As a coach, you'll help your client bring mindful awareness to subjective experience, which is more limited than objective experience. Once they're able to reflect on experience and name them, they can begin to work through it from a place of greater wisdom. They can then set intentions on how to work with it in the coming weeks.

The coaching skill of labeling thought patterns or stories is an important part of the meaning making process.

Once your client understands the challenge, they can more easily label it. And once they can label it, they can start breaking it down. This coaching skill of labeling thought patterns is an important part of the meaning making process you learned last week, but it can also be used as an à la carte coaching skill whenever your client needs help making the shift from subjective to objective awareness.

Meaning in the Body

The body has wisdom that transcends the mind.

The mind can expand and shift the way it thinks about something and, in doing so, transform your client's experience of reality. But the body is also source of wisdom beyond the mind.

When you coach your client to access their body's wisdom, they can tap into a level of truth that isn't limited by language and concepts. The gut and the heart both have powerful messages to share—if your client is inspired to listen to them.

The qualia of the body

Throughout this program, we've used the word qualia to describe the direct conscious experience of something. When the qualia of an experience takes the form of a subtle, internal bodily sensation, its scientific term is interoceptive awareness. This involves the sensory process of receiving, accessing, and appraising internal bodily signals—including emotions and intuitions.

Interoceptive awareness means perceiving within.

If you've ever felt butterflies in your stomach, had a racing heart, gotten choked up by sadness, or flushed red with embarrassment, you've experienced interoceptive awareness. Even feeling ticklish, hungry, or itchy involves interoceptive awareness. It's also the slight tingle that lets you know you might be getting a cold. It can be a minor stiffness reminding you that if you don't take it easy, an old injury could flare up.

If your client is suffering from stress, tuning into their interoceptive awareness can help them identify the subtle body changes before stress turns into panic. And if you're coaching someone through health or lifestyle changes, helping them perceive the subtle changes within can help them identify which foods energize them and which ones make them feel worse.

A fine-tuned interoceptive awareness can be a superpower to help your clients make the best possible choices for their well-being.

Interoceptive Awareness and the Brain

A mindful brain can tap into bodily awareness.

- According to research by cognitive psychologists Zindel Segal and Adam Anderson, interoception relies on brain regions that link the cortex to the limbic system.
- Limbic connections support direct access to emotions and physical sensations.

The cortex is more responsible for our conceptual sense of self and meaning.

By recruiting limbic-bridge areas like the insula and posterior cingulate, someone practicing interoceptive awareness may bypass the cortex—directly tapping into bodily awareness that’s free from judgment or conceptual self-evaluation.

In MRI scans of Navy SEALs and elite adventure racers, higher levels of interoceptive awareness have been linked to greater stress resilience and self-regulation of emotion. Other studies have shown that mindfulness meditation can improve the brain regions responsible for interoceptive awareness.

Help your clients improve their interoceptive awareness.

Into the Fire

The mind can shift from thought to direct experience.

One way to coach the body when your client is stuck in a limiting belief is to take them deeper into the direct experience of it. This kind of coaching is sometimes called leading your client into the fire.

Feeling the pain of being stuck in a limiting belief is both sobering and motivating.

Remember, some of these limiting beliefs have been sneaking around in your client’s psyche for a long time. Your client may be reluctant to let them go. But by having them sit, meditate, and feel the contraction of the limiting belief, you can help them develop an urgency and strong desire to change.

Remember, though, that your client is the expert in their own life. Until they say they’re ready to release the old, limiting belief and shift to a new, more positive one, any work toward brainstorming new perspectives will be in vain. It’s always best to meet your client where they are.



Perspectives on Meaning

Perspectives on Meaning

The Coach's Perspective

As a coach, you may develop personal perspectives about your client.

Over the course of the coaching relationship, you'll develop a perspective on your client. You may notice yourself making assumptions—you may even start to think that your story about them is true.

Remember, coaching is a spiritual practice, so whenever you feel even a light conflict or tension around a client, it's worth exploring.

Theory of Mind

The ability to predict the thoughts, emotions, and intentions of others is called theory of mind.

Unfortunately, research has shown that humans are not as good at this as we'd like to believe. It turns out psychologists are actually pretty bad at predicting violence or suicide risk in their own patients. And even with all their experience and education, lawyers and judges don't seem to detect lies with much better accuracy than pure chance.

Coaching relies on intuition, but there's a fine line between an intuitive understanding and a false assumption.

When you find yourself interpreting a vague facial expression or a small change in tone from your client, take a mental moment and silently label the thought "Mindreading." Then, ask your client about it instead.

A direct conversation about the meaning you're making of your client will always yield the greatest accuracy.

If you find yourself caught in a loop of making negative meaning around your client, coach yourself using the same process you learned in the structured meaning exercise. You may even give yourself the worksheet.

By the same token, if you find yourself rigidly attached to their dosha quiz and their scores, pause and say to yourself "Maybe one option is to explore the current state of doshic balance or imbalance."

Breaking the Rules

Don't be afraid to break the rules.

As you gain more confidence, wisdom, and experience as a coach, you may find yourself mindfully breaking many of the "rules" you've learned in this course. Having all the perspectives come from your client is one such rule—after all, your perspective has value to the client too.

You're a certified teacher in both meditation and Ayurvedic lifestyle, and you've gained a better understanding of transformational psychology through Coaching Certification. You have a lot to offer from your experience. You've already been through many of the coaching exercises yourself and done much of the work your client is doing. So, why shouldn't you throw some of your own meaning into the mix? Or ask yourself, "What would Deepak do?"

Let's call this new coaching skill "offering your client another perspective" or "offering a reflection with wisdom."

Here are three types of perspectives you might offer your client when they're stuck in a limiting belief:

1. Your personal experience
2. Deepak's experience
3. What you know about your client from what they've told you.

Your Personal Experience

What distinguishes the coach from the mentor?

At the beginning of your Chopra Coaching education, you learned about the coach's role as it compares to other mentorship roles.

- **The mentor:** A mentor gives the client wisdom extracted from their own lived experience.
- **The coach:** A coach generally elicits wisdom from their client.

Still, there are nuances in the coaching relationship that allow the coach to offer perspective as a mentor.

As you move through your coaching career, you'll inevitably end up coaching someone through a topic you've done a great deal of work on yourself. For example:

- If you've spent 20 years in recovery, you likely have a bit of perspective to offer a client who's working through their sugar addiction for the first time.
- If you've been happily married for decades, there's a good chance your perspective on relationships has some value.

As someone who has made healthy lifestyle changes, integrated meditation into daily life, and experienced personal transformation, you can be a great source of wisdom for your clients.

That said, sharing a perspective isn't the same as giving advice. Advice comes from a place of authority and assumes your perspective is the right one. While it was obviously right for you, it may not be right for every client.

How do I share my personal perspective with my clients?

- Before sharing your perspective, ask your client if they would like to hear it.
- Share your perspective with humility and non-attachment.
- Follow up with questions –Which parts resonate with you, and which don't?
- You might end the sharing moment by inviting the client to rephrase it, to share their takeaways, or to reflect on the new meaning.
- Remember: Keep your client in the driver's seat.

Be careful not to share too much or too often. If you're offering your own perspective in every session, it's probably too much—your coaching has become about you, rather than your client.

Deepak's Perspective

Share Deepak's perspective. You're probably aware that Deepak Chopra™ has written over 80 books filled with Vedic wisdom, been quoted countless times, and hosted several televised talks that could benefit your client. Deepak's perspectives on purpose, meaning, and the universe itself may inspire and motivate your client in new ways.

You might choose to pull from...

- One of his many books, such as *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, *Perfect Health*, or *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire*.
- An applicable article or quote on chopra.com.
- A video you watched on the Chopra YouTube channel.

However, exposure to Deepak's ideas alone probably won't suffice to help your clients achieve the personal transformation they seek. The breakthrough comes when your client finds the right perspective at the right time, presented in the right way. This is where your curated knowledge of Deepak's teachings come in.

By pulling from your own Chopra education and presenting the right Vedic wisdom at the right time, you'll help your client get the most value out of Deepak's teachings. Then, you can help your client hold onto that perspective for weeks, months, and even years.

Every person can only function from their own level of awareness, and the journey to enlightenment is unique for everyone.

What You Know About Your Client

The coaching relationship is a narrative arc that unfolds over time.

As you practice the fundamental coaching skill of deep and attentive listening throughout your coaching relationship, you'll begin to notice themes that arise from session to session. Eventually, you'll get to know your client pretty well—through the good times and the bad.

What can I do when a client is stuck in limited meaning?

- If the client is: Narrowly focused on their challenge
Try reflecting a story they shared about time when they felt happier and more fulfilled. You may help to bring some clarity and perspective to their situation—helping them find the motivation to create a new meaning based on their own wisdom.
- If the client is: Stuck in a pessimistic meaning
Despite your client’s progress, they may get stuck in a fixed mindset about their ability. Remind them of the goals they’ve already made through the coaching relationship so far. You might ask a powerful question, “How do you reconcile your successes if this limiting belief were true?”
- If the client is: Stuck deep in limited meaning
This may not be the time to offer any perspectives—even their own. If the client is in a place of constricted awareness, a reminder of what they said while at their best may have an adverse effect—a reminder of how far they’ve fallen. In that case, it may be best to stay with the qualia of the challenge.

Whenever your client is stuck, rather than trying to force them to shift their meaning, use your coaching skills to serve their best interests with patience and compassion.



When Meaning Isn't Appropriate

When Meaning Isn't Appropriate

Making Less Meaning

Sometimes meaning making isn't the answer.

So far, you've focused on the many benefits of coaching your clients to make optimistic meaning around challenging situations. But sometimes, even the attempt to make positive meaning can come at a cost.

For example, mental stories—even good ones—can separate your client from the qualia of the moment. If they're caught up in mentally narrating what's happening, they may miss the richness of directly experiencing the moment through their senses.

And sometimes, the effort of labeling a limited story, brainstorming alternatives, and choosing a new one can just feel mentally exhausting. Your client may simply not have the time or energy to go through the process, and that's OK.

Part of coaching your clients toward conscious evolution is expanding their meaning making capacity. But another aspect of this evolution is to help them see when it makes more sense to drop the story altogether.

Ask powerful questions to help your clients drop their story altogether.

- What would it be like to live in this moment without thinking about the situation?
- What if the situation didn't have any meaning at all?
- What If the situation is truly "just is what it is"?

Life can feel like a waking meditation—and in a way, it is. In the Vedic tradition, we realize we're all playing roles in the larger cosmic play. Our waking state of consciousness is ultimately just an illusion. This concept is known as maya, or that which is not.

Maya: Maya is when we superimpose an idea or memory onto something else and create a different reality from what's truly there.

There's a story that illustrates the illusion of maya.

A man sees a rope on a dark road and shouts, "Snake, snake!" When light is brought, he realizes it was just a rope. The rope didn't change; it was always a rope and it was only the man's mistake that created the illusion of a snake.

Understanding that the meaning we create is just part of the illusion may help your client release their grip on the meanings they create—and simply be.

Less meaning meditation

Guide a meditation to go beyond the stories.

Use or modify this script as a foundation to guide your client in transcending limiting beliefs, concepts, and past conditioning that are holding your client back.

Step 1: Provide an overview.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

Often we get attached to the stories we've created, but they're not who we *really* are. The stories we create limit and distort our view of life. I'll guide you in a meditation to start dropping some of the limiting stories that you may have created.

Whatever follows "I am," are the stories you've created about yourself.

Step 2: Invite your client to settle into stillness.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

Please close your eyes. Allow your body to relax. Let go of the thoughts that aren't important right now.

Step 3: Ask them to repeat "I am" followed by their first and last names.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

The story we're most attached to is our name. Begin silently repeating "I am" followed by your first and last names.

Step 4: Ask them to repeat "I am" followed by their first name.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

Now drop the last name, your family history, lineage. Just repeat "I am" and your first name.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

Step 5: Ask them to drop their first name and repeat "I am."

Now drop the name completely. Releasing all the stories, all the limitations and tired beliefs. Just repeating "I am," "I am," "I am." When you drop everything, all that's left is "I." This is your truth.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

Step 6: Introduce the mantra *Ahum*.

Pause for 2-3 minutes of silence.

Now begin silently repeating the Sanskrit vibration for I am:

Ahum Ahum Ahum

Allow the vibration to take you deeper to that place where knowledge dissolves into knowingness.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

Step 7: Ask them to stop repeating the mantra.

Keeping your eyes closed, please stop repeating the mantra and rest easily.

MEDITATION SCRIPT

Step 8: Invite them to open their eyes.

Take a few deeper breaths, gently moving the body. When you're ready, please open your eyes, slowly.

The flow State

The "flow state" described in performance psychology is synonymous with what athletes often call "being in the zone."

Flow state is a state of high performance characterized by complete and effortless focus with an absence of thought. This state isn't limited to athletes, though.

It can be felt anytime there's the right mixture of mastery, focused interest, alignment with dharma, and present moment awareness. The more present a person is, the more likely they are to achieve this flow state in everyday life.

Maybe you've experienced a day or a moment in time during which you felt like you were perfectly aligned.

Spiritual flow is often characterized by...

- A deep attunement to nature.
- A feeling of being intuitively guided.
- A profound absence of thinking.

Coaching a client to let go of the need to make meaning requires that they feel a deep sense of trust in the universe and their own intuition. You might ask a few questions.

Ask questions to help your clients let go of meaning.

- If you dropped all thoughts around this situation, what do you know would flow through you?
- If you released attachment to your story, what do you know would happen through you?
- What intention does the universe have for you this week?

A Moment Without Meaning

Help your client ease into the unknown.

It's likely that most of your clients will be uncomfortable not knowing the answer to questions or not understanding the reason for certain events. They may feel like they should have the answer to everything.

- **Release** the need to make meaning out of every event?
- Be **OK** with simply not knowing?
- **Surrender** to the fact that their mind is simply limited in its ability to know all things all the time?

For a moment in time, it is possible to help your client get comfortable with no meaning.

A quick mindful awareness exercise can help your clients shift the focus away from meaning—and access the present moment.

Here is a mindful awareness exercise you can use if your client gets stuck or frustrated with the structured meaning making process.

Step 1: Invite your client to close their eyes and get comfortable.

Before you begin, let them know you're going to guide them in a short visualization exercise. Then, invite them to take a moment to pause and close their eyes. Ask them to bring their attention to the breath.

Step 2: Guide them to turn their awareness to the experiences in the room.

Guide them to hear the sounds around them. Ask them to notice the temperature of their skin. Ask them to gaze into the shimmering darkness behind their closed eyes.

Step 3: Give them a few moments to feel into the qualia of the moment.

Ask them to notice the next time the story or limited meaning arises again. Each time they notice this meaning, invite them to smile and return their attention to their breath.

After this exercise, you may or may not choose to continue with the meaning making process.

Once the exercise is over, you can either return your client to the meaning making process with greater clarity, or you may decide to let go of the process altogether.

There are times when pausing and dropping all inclination to create meaning becomes the work or intention for your client in the coming week.

Ask one of these powerful questions to help your clients be OK with no meaning.

- What would it be like to just be with this challenge?
- What would it be like to not need to know?
- What would it take to be OK with not understanding this week?
- If there were no answers available, what else could become possible this week?

Sometimes, it's just too early to make new meaning.

Coaching your client to let go of meaning making might be the right move when they're going through a major transition. When your client is facing a big move, a breakup, a career transition, a scary diagnosis, or sad news about a loved one, it may be too early for an optimistic or growth perspective. They may need time to process whatever they're facing.

In this case, being present to not knowing may be more authentic for your client than trying to force or plaster on a new story.

The Meaning of Pain

Help your clients know the difference between pain and suffering.

You may have heard the old Buddhist saying, "Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional." As a coach, you can help your clients distinguish between the two.

- Pain has a qualia. It's an interoceptive experience of tingling, burning, throbbing, aching, tenderness, stiffness, or another painful sensation.
- Suffering is the negative (or fear based) meaning we make of the pain.

"When touched with a feeling of pain, the ordinary uninstructed person sorrows, grieves, and laments, beats his breast, becomes distraught. So he feels two pains, physical and mental. Just as if they were to shoot a man with an arrow and, right afterward, were to shoot him with another one, so that he would feel the pains of two arrows." - Buddha

Pain is an ambiguous, subjective perception. The same pain stimulation can be perceived as mild or unbearable—depending on context, personality, emotional state, and expectations.

Any negative meaning your client makes around physical or emotional pain will intensify when they're in a place of constricted awareness. A meaning made out of fear leads to catastrophizing, and catastrophizing leads to more pain. It's easy to get stuck in a feedback loop wherein the story makes the pain worse, the pain makes the story worse, and so on.

Improv your own guided meditation to help clients reframe the meaning of pain.

You can guide your client in a breath awareness meditation to expand their awareness of pain without identifying with or making unhelpful meaning of it. They may eventually experience pain as an impermanent, everchanging dance of sensations. Then, when the false story about pain arises, it can be clearly seen and quickly released.



Meaning Home Practicing

Meaning Home Practices

Home practices will help your clients continue their meaning making work between coaching sessions.

The home practices you'll learn in this lesson will help your clients infuse new meaning to transcend past stories and limiting beliefs.

As always, consider your client's *prakruti* when assigning or co-creating home practices. Keep their *vikruti* in mind as well.

Home Practice 1: Breathe and check in

What it's for: Checking in on meaning

Instructions for your client: To increase your awareness about how many times you create meaning out of daily experiences, try this exercise. Every time you notice yourself making meaning this week, pause, take a breath, and check in with each of your senses. Then continue with your daily activities.

Home Practice 2: Pause and admit

What it's for: Being OK with not knowing the meaning

Instructions for your client: The next time you catch yourself making up meaning just so you can maintain the illusion of certainty, pause and admit to yourself that you don't actually know yet, and that it's OK.

Reminder: co-create home practices with your client. During the coaching conversations, you may uncover new home practices. Your clients may share solutions and ideas that they tried throughout the week. Check in with your clients about progress throughout the week, and build on the home practices that are working for them.



PART 4

Coaching Shadow

Coaching Manual Part 4: Shadow

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What is Shadow?

What is a Shadow?

We all have a Shadow.

Life experiences have shaped you into your one-of-a-kind, amazing self. But they've also shaped the parts of yourself that you don't like. This is your Shadow—everyone has one. It's the part of ourselves we judge—the part we've rejected, disowned, and hidden from ourselves. This part is often uncomfortable for us to acknowledge, and it's common to hide it or pretend it isn't there.

As a Chopra-certified instructor, you're already committed to the path of Ayurveda, meditation, and well-being coaching. It's likely that you consider yourself a spiritual person. In spiritual communities, there's often a particularly strong desire—even pressure—to be seen as kind, wise, peaceful, calm, and enlightened. You may want to do the right thing in every situation—aligning with what you perceive as the identity of a spiritual person. This can make it even harder to confront your Shadow.

It's normal to be authentically spiritual and also still have some work to do.

If you identify as a spiritual person, it may be especially difficult to own your anger, shame, guilt, judgment, rage, or harshness. These aspects of human nature feel tainting, and coming to terms with them can hurt the ego-identity—even though these emotions exist within all of us.

Shadow is the opposite of the archetype

Deepak teaches, "The shadow is a human creation—the illusion of separateness. Together we created the shadow that haunts us, and embracing it is the key to our transformation."

It may be uncomfortable, but to progress on your spiritual path, you must come to terms with your Shadow.



Shadow - Structured

Shadow—Structured

Shadow Work

Your client's Shadow contains the aspects of their nature that they've suppressed.

Anything that annoys, disgusts, or horrifies your client about themselves or others is part of their Shadow. You learned in the Shadow—Experience session that our Shadow is the part of ourselves that we try to hide, ignore, or run away from. We do this as an attempt to uphold the illusion of having it all together. But attempting to outrun one's own Shadow is futile—and eventually, it just brings about more pain and suffering.

As you help your client see their hidden Shadow, they'll begin to recognize how easily Shadow behavior can sabotage their intentions, relationships, and well-being. As you guide them to fully embrace their totality—the light and the dark—they can finally begin freeing themselves from their Shadow.

Everyone has some degree of Shadow energy within them.

If we didn't have some degree of Shadow, we'd all exist in a constant state of total liberation, joy, and bliss—or would we? After all, there's no joy or bliss without its opposite.

The human experience becomes real through a world of duality. We cannot have any worldly experience without the contrast of the opposites.

But often, the difficult emotions that erupt from the Shadow are attached to unresolved traumatic or micro-traumatic events. The emotional residue of those past events continues negatively impacting your client's awareness of their present moment experience.

Your client's willingness to engage in Shadow work is a courageous journey of descent. For the sake of their truth and their dharma, they must retrieve the parts of themselves that they've abandoned out of shame and guilt.

Projected Shadow Work

We all project our light and darkness.

You learned in the Purpose cornerstone that projected archetypes help clients clarify their values and special powers by looking at the people they most respect and admire. This helps clients own their greatness, which they can see in others yet haven't fully embraced in themselves.

The opposite is true, too—we also project our inner darkness onto others. Your client can resolve their Shadow by examining what they project onto others—then offering compassion to those people and themselves.

Coaching Shadow

How will I know it's time to coach my client around Shadow?

Often, the first sign that your client could use coaching around their Shadow is when they're triggered by someone or have a strong judgment about that person. Their Shadow can manifest in projecting their subconscious negativity onto someone else.

For example, they may feel inferior, or like they don't measure up to some standard—but instead of telling themselves they're good enough, or objectively and non-judgmentally acknowledging that they still have work to do, they search for what's not good enough in others. They may project their own insecurities and repressed emotions onto friend and foe alike. This results in feelings of superiority, arrogance, defensiveness, jealousy, and more.

Your clients may repress their Shadow.

You may notice that some clients bury their Shadow deep in their psyche and only see it in others. Other clients may hide it in plain sight by covering it up with its opposite way of being—they may create an entire identity around overcompensation for a perceived vulnerability.

This can present as an out-of-balance character strength. For example:

- A client who judges themselves or others for being needy may be a chronic caretaker of others—while being fiercely independent and unwilling to accept support when they need it themselves.
- A client who judges themselves or others for being weak may repel friends by repeatedly boasting about their kung fu black belt—or even injure themselves by working out too hard.
- A client who judges themselves or others for not being valuable, capable, or worthy may end up sacrificing relationships and burning themselves out trying to run several multimillion-dollar businesses.

These people may pour themselves into a rigid idea of who they think they “should” be, yet still not feel like they've done enough. Any joy they feel in their success will be fleeting at best. The Shadow emotion still lives at their core, and no amount of its opposite will bring them back to wholeness.

They aren't the only ones with Shadows, though. Don't forget, you have one too—and sometimes, you may even see it in your clients.

What judgments have you made about your practice client so far?

If judging a client hasn't happened yet, it eventually will. Remember what you learned in the Meaning cornerstone—coaching is a spiritual practice, and it's worth exploring any conflict or tension you feel around a client.

There's no need to judge yourself for judging, but now is the time to investigate. On your own time, take yourself through the worksheet—focusing on what you've projected onto your client. Then, notice the impact that owning this Shadow has on your coaching relationship.

As you see yourself more completely, you will have compassion for your faults, and that will lead to complete self-acceptance.” - Deepak Chopra



Beginning the Shadow Work Process

Beginning the Shadow Work Process

Coach Shadow organically when you notice clients are triggered or expressing judgment.

As you've learned, Purpose and Intention coaching work well when introduced in a structured way at the beginning of the coaching relationship. The step-by-step processes in these cornerstones establish direction and motivation for the future.

Meaning and Shadow coaching, on the other hand—even the structured processes—typically work best when they arise organically. They're often most beneficial in direct response to a specific life event or condition, as they're designed to address external challenges and dissolve internal negativity.

How will you know when Shadow work is the right move?

Sometimes the need to coach Shadow spontaneously arises.

Even if you haven't planned to coach the structured Shadow process in a particular session, sometimes the need or opportunity spontaneously arises—such as when a client:

- Reacts emotionally.
- Gets triggered.
- Expresses a painful judgment toward another person or group of people.

Yet what points you and your client toward Shadow work won't always be the judgment itself, but the energy behind it.

As a coach, pay attention to what seems painful for your client. If a judgment has an energy of indifference, it probably isn't the Shadow. But if it triggers a strong emotion or painful somatic experience—that is, a physical reaction—in your client, you'll want to get curious.

What are the signs to coach Shadow?

- Your client feels overly inflamed by a petty annoyance toward someone who is unimportant in their life.
- Your client holds baseless blame—based on their own challenges—towards someone close to them.
- Your client harshly judges the behaviors or beliefs of a particular person in their life.
- Your client holds negative emotions toward an entire group of people they've never met.
- Your client has impatience, intolerance, or bias against a generalized “kind of person.”

If any of these signs arise in a coaching session, it may be worth guiding your client into the Shadow work process.

Sometimes, it's worth engaging your client in the Shadow work process whether they're triggered or not.

Shadows aren't always accessible on demand, but your client may possess fragmented Shadow emotions or behaviors they haven't yet owned or fully integrated.

The first part of the Shadow work process involves making a list of people we judge. When there's sufficient trust in the coaching relationship, most clients can identify someone they judge or who triggers them.

But when a client can't come up with anyone, it could mean a few things:

- **They're in a flowing, positive place of expanded awareness.** They're not currently present to their Shadow, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist—it's just hibernating until the next trigger arises.
- **They're not sufficiently mindful of their own thoughts and emotions.** They may not even register the subconscious judgments they sling at others throughout the week.
- **Their ego is attached to an identity of being a good, moral, and/or spiritual person.** The idea of having a Shadow is in conflict with this perceived identity, and they're not yet confident enough to expand from niceness to wholeness.
- **Their ego is protecting them from what they subconsciously perceive as painful.** This small, socially constructed self may pressure your client to see themselves as too nice to judge others, or it may cause them—consciously or not—to play aloof during your session.
- **There isn't sufficient trust in the coaching relationship.** The client is more concerned with your approval than with their own development—or worried that you'll judge them if they expose themselves.

If one of these things is true of your client, they may not be ready for Shadow work. Shadow work can only be invited—never forced. There are ways to address resistance and build a safe space for your client to work through their Shadow, but ultimately, if they aren't ready, they aren't ready—and that's OK.

Building a Safe Space

Build a safe space for your clients to explore Shadow.

Shadow work can be an intensely vulnerable experience. After all, generally speaking, our ego wants to look good at all times and at all costs. We present ourselves as having it all together, going to great lengths to protect ourselves from negative evaluation.

Shadow work takes immense courage on your client's part—it involves exploring their deepest thoughts and darkest secrets. So, building a safe, respectful, and trusting space for your client is a prerequisite for success.

Although this is deep work, you can bring a light energy to the process. Ideally, you'll have built a rapport with your client before you approach Shadow coaching with them. But if there's any question about trust, circle back and reinforce their confidence.

Remind your client that this is the work of spiritual warriors. Acknowledge them for their courage and any other strengths you see in them.

Here are some ways to build a safe space for coaching your clients around their Shadow:

- Approach the process with reverence for your client’s openness to do this work.
- Don’t judge their judgments—stay neutral and equanimous as they share their projected Shadow.
- Normalize their Shadow—remind them that everyone has repressed parts of themselves.
- Meet difficult emotions with compassionate listening and unconditional acceptance.
- Share your own Shadow journey to build common humanity, trust, and motivation.
- Practice non-attachment if they can’t come up with something that seems especially deep or valuable.

Sometimes, though, you set your client up to feel safe, secure, and supported—yet they still meet you with resistance.

Resistance to Shadow Work

If you perceive hesitation or discomfort around starting Shadow work, start by giving your client an overview of the process.

It can be helpful to share some of the theory and context around Shadow work—especially if your client has never engaged with their Shadow before. You might clearly define the Shadow, then describe the structure of the Shadow work process. Once your client's mind is satisfied, their heart can feel safe to open.

In the Meaning cornerstone, you learned to be wary of spiritually bypassing the needs of your clients. This is when we use spiritual practices to avoid dealing with painful feelings, unresolved wounds, and developmental needs. Sometimes, it may seem easier to disengage from your client in this way when you come up against resistance. But often, all they need is a little push.

Try exploring how your clients may have been a little bit like the people they judge.

The Shadow work process requires your client to examine how they project what they dislike about themselves onto other people. They may be resistant to seeing themselves in the same category as someone they dislike.

In this case, it may help to soften the inquiry. For example, instead of saying “*How are you also like this?*”, try asking “*If this way of being exists on a spectrum and this person is a 10, where are you on the spectrum, if at all? How have you been even a little bit like this at some point in the past?*”

It's possible that clients may challenge the theory behind Shadow work.

Your client may challenge the theory behind Shadow work in general, saying something like, “What about murder? I judge murderers, but I’m in no way like one.” This kind of hypothetical resistance may not be worth engaging with—it might be a sign that your client isn’t yet ready for Shadow work.

But if you sense the potential for self-inquiry just beyond the gatekeeping ego, there are ways to address your client’s skepticism.

1. First, try to move from the hypothetical realm to a real example in their life. Remember, it's not necessarily the judgment itself that matters—it's the energy behind the judgment that reveals a Shadow.
2. If your client won't open to a personal example, next you can try to get on the same page as them. Validate that of course they aren't a murderer of other people—but inquire, without judgment, whether they eat meat, step on spiders, and so on. Illustrate that there is a spectrum of behaviors, values, and habits that they may judge.
3. Finally, you can also remind your client that this process is just a doorway into a deeper conversation about hidden parts of themselves—it isn't meant to be taken literally. Confirm again that your client is not a murderer in the literal sense, but see if you can have them think about it metaphorically.

Again, hyperrational clients may need this mental understanding around the mechanism of Shadow work before they will grant you access to their vulnerable heart.



Facilitating the Shadow Work Process

Facilitating the Shadow Work Process

Setting Up to Coach

Give your clients an overview of Shadow work.

Before you begin coaching a client around Shadow, you may want to remind them of the structured activity they completed in the Purpose cornerstone. Explain that just as naming people they admire helped them identify their archetype and clarify their special powers, in this exercise, exploring people they judge will help them access the unconscious.

The core coaching skills will help you guide clients mindfully and compassionately.

During the Shadow work process, use your core coaching skills:

- Listening
- Asking powerful questions
- Offering reflections

Invite your clients to share their insights throughout the exercise. Gently guide them go deeper and clarify these insights.

Before coaching Shadow, prepare your client with a mindful moment.

Before beginning the Shadow Work worksheet, take a moment to lead your client in a short guided or breath awareness meditation to help them access inner stillness.

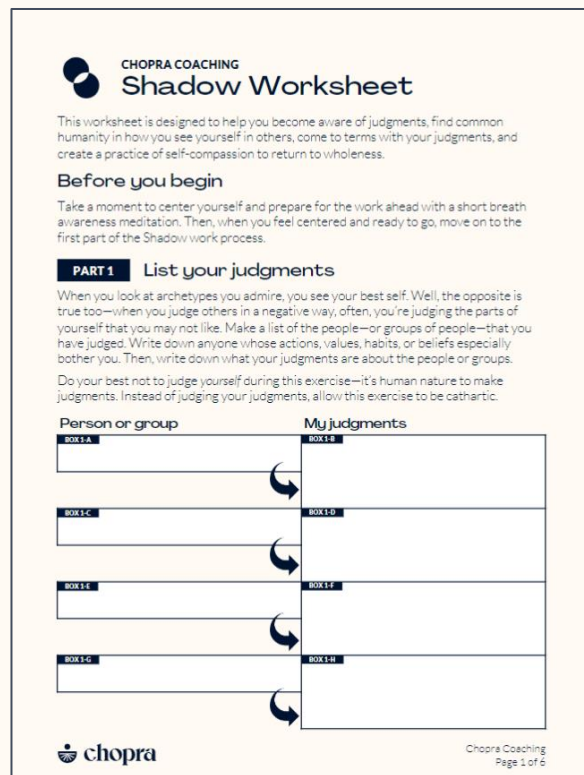
Once you feel they are centered and ready to go, move on to the first part of the Shadow work process. Invite them to approach the process with self-compassion. Let them know this is courageous work. Create a safe space for them to explore both the light and the dark.

The Worksheet: Part 1

Using Part 1 of the Shadow Work worksheet, have your client write down people—or groups of people—that they may have judged. You might encourage them to dig deep, thinking back to times in the past when they formed judgments. Encourage your client to brainstorm as many people or groups as they can think of. If they need more room, they can flip the page over or use a spare sheet of paper.

Ask your clients to brainstorm people they project their Shadow onto.

- Who are some of the people you find rude, selfish, or inconsiderate?
- Who gets under your nail?
- Are you triggered by entire groups of people whose beliefs you disagree with?



CHOPRA COACHING
Shadow Worksheet


This worksheet is designed to help you become aware of judgments, find common humanity in how you see yourself in others, come to terms with your judgments, and create a practice of self-compassion to return to wholeness.

Before you begin
Take a moment to center yourself and prepare for the work ahead with a short breath awareness meditation. Then, when you feel centered and ready to go, move on to the first part of the Shadow work process.

PART 1 List your judgments

When you look at archetypes you admire, you see your best self. Well, the opposite is true too—when you judge others in a negative way, often, you're judging the parts of yourself that you may not like. Make a list of the people—or groups of people—that you have judged. Write down anyone whose actions, values, habits, or beliefs especially bother you. Then, write down what your judgments are about the people or groups. Do your best not to judge yourself during this exercise—it's human nature to make judgments. Instead of judging your judgments, allow this exercise to be cathartic.

Person or group	My judgments
BOX 1.A	BOX 1.E
BOX 1.C	BOX 1.G
BOX 1.E	BOX 1.I
BOX 1.G	BOX 1.H

 Chopra Coaching
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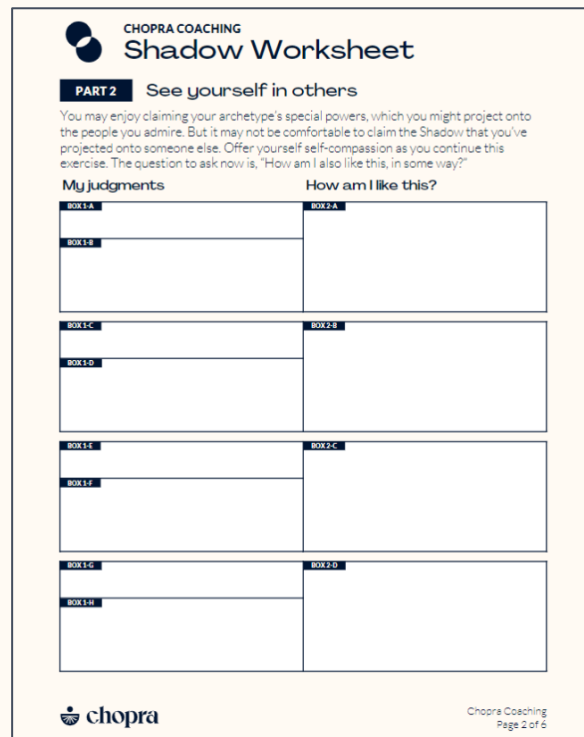
The Worksheet: Part 2

Continue with Part 2 of the Shadow Worksheet. Help your client see themselves in others.

This step can be metaphorical, and there's a spectrum. Help your client understand that they might not be exactly like the person they've judged, but they probably share at least a few qualities.

Ask powerful questions to help your clients go deeper.

- How are you also like this person, in some way?
- Why are you judging this person?
- What have they triggered inside of you?
- Have they triggered something in your core values?
- Are there times in your life you've acted like this person?




CHOPRA COACHING
Shadow Worksheet

PART 2 See yourself in others

You may enjoy claiming your archetype's special powers, which you might project onto the people you admire. But it may not be comfortable to claim the Shadow that you've projected onto someone else. Offer yourself self-compassion as you continue this exercise. The question to ask now is, "How am I also like this, in some way?"

My judgments	How am I like this?
BOX 1.A	BOX 2.A
BOX 1.B	
BOX 1.C	BOX 2.B
BOX 1.D	
BOX 1.E	BOX 2.C
BOX 1.F	
BOX 1.G	BOX 2.D
BOX 1.H	

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If your client doesn't identify with a judgment, inquire into how they are the opposite.

Shadow work should never be forced.

If your client isn't ready to dig deeper into Shadow, that's OK. Redirect the conversation. You might:

- Shift the conversation toward the Meaning cornerstone.
- Ask a powerful question, "How can I support you in gaining the courage to explore Shadow more deeply?"

The Worksheet: Part 3

Flip to Part 3 to help your clients complete the next step of the Shadow Worksheet. Ask your client to consider their ego's benefits and the real-world costs of holding on to their Shadow. When your client better understands their Shadow in terms of how it has functioned for their ego and what it costs them in terms of relationships, community, and personal growth, the Shadow starts to loosen its grip.

The ego's benefit of holding on to Shadow may not immediately be obvious to your client. In truth, it's not really a benefit at all. To help explain the process, it may be helpful for you to come prepared with a few examples of how someone might superficially feel benefits from holding onto emotions or behaviors associated with their Shadow.

Consider the ego's perceived benefits of:

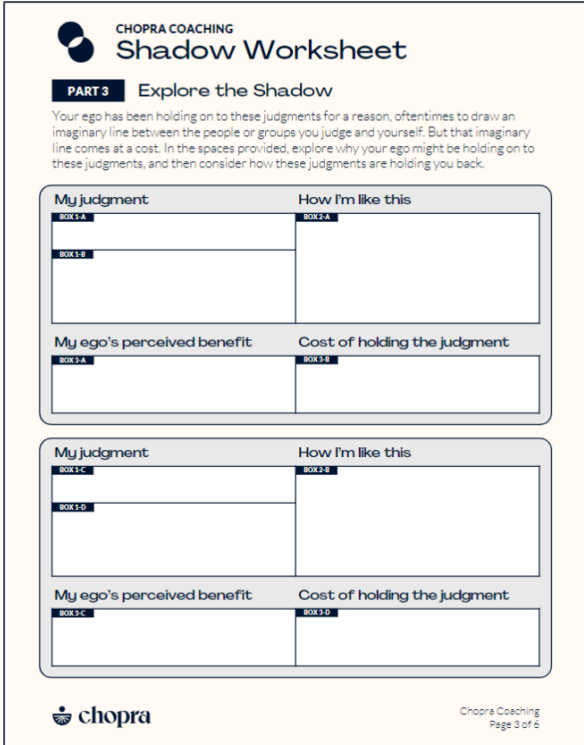
Playing the victim: By playing the victim, your client's ego may benefit from extra attention, assistance, or empathy from others.

Being critical of others: By being critical of others, your client's ego may benefit by experiencing feelings of protection or separation from outside criticism.

Expressing anger: By expressing anger, your client's ego may benefit by feeling defended or separated from deeper, more repressed emotions.

After taking the time to carefully explain the meaning of the ego's perceived benefit, ask your client to consider the costs of holding onto their Shadow, then to write it down in the spaces provided.

Some of the costs associated with holding onto Shadow may seem obvious, while others are harder to uncover. You can help your clients recognize both.



CHOPRA COACHING
Shadow Worksheet

PART 3 Explore the Shadow

Your ego has been holding on to these judgments for a reason, oftentimes to draw an imaginary line between the people or groups you judge and yourself. But that imaginary line comes at a cost. In the spaces provided, explore why your ego might be holding on to these judgments, and then consider how these judgments are holding you back.

My judgment BOX 9A	How I'm like this BOX 9B
My ego's perceived benefit BOX 9C	Cost of holding the judgment BOX 9D

My judgment BOX 10A	How I'm like this BOX 10B
My ego's perceived benefit BOX 10C	Cost of holding the judgment BOX 10D

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Obvious costs:

- Remaining in a place of judgment
- Creating separation in your relationships
- Being unable to own your actions
- Losing compassion for others
- Holding yourself back from fully expressing your purpose
- Sabotaging your intentions

On the other hand, the less obvious costs are those associated with holding on to a perceived strength. Many times people hold on to their Shadow because they see the benefits as a strength, but they're really overcompensating for something deeper. It's really Shadow in disguise.

These costs arise when your client is so fearful of or repulsed by their Shadow that they try too hard to become its opposite.

Less obvious costs:

- Courage can lead to brash, unnecessary risk taking.
- Discipline can become rigidity and inflexibility.
- Compassion can lead to enabling unhealthy behaviors.
- Leadership can turn to an obsession with control.
- Positivity can lead to living inauthentically.

These weaknesses can limit your client's potential and obstruct their progress toward well-being.

Ask your clients to consider the benefits and costs of their Shadow.

- How has your Shadow protected you?
- What pain does your Shadow help you avoid?
- What do you get out of keeping your Shadow?
- How does this Shadow impact your well-being?
- How does your shadow limit your purpose or intentions?
- How does your shadow show up in relationships?

Preparing for Part 4

Before you move on to the final part of the process, you may want to provide your client with some context around the ideas of wholeness and self-compassion, as they relate to Shadow work.

Only when your clients accept, love, and own every part of themselves can they feel truly whole.

When we talk about wholeness in a Chopra Coaching context, we aren't talking about some idea of purity or untainted innocence. The spiritual path is a dusty road—think of a lotus flower unfurling amid a muddy swamp.

The path toward wholeness through which we're coaching our clients isn't about finding or fixing their missing parts. It's about fully accepting that their wholeness includes those missing parts, their dirty parts, their wounds, and their traumas.

"Wholeness overcomes the Shadow by absorbing it. The illusion that we fall into is thinking that life forces us to choose between good and evil. In reality, there is a third way, which is to be whole." -Deepak Chopra

From the perspective of wholeness, you can balance the darkness and the light. There is no need to label yourself or anyone else as part of a good-versus-evil or right-versus-wrong drama. You can exchange judgment for forgiveness, compassion, and loving kindness. That is the healing that comes from being whole.

The only thing that's ever been "wrong" with your client is their limiting belief that something is wrong with them.

Once your client has accessed, accepted, and released their Shadow, you may want to remind who they really are: perfect and whole. The reality is that they never needed to do anything. They simply need to remember their essential nature, which is perfection—Shadow and all.

We aren't whole despite your faults. We are whole because of them.

You can describe a concept central to traditional Japanese aesthetics: ***Wabi-sabi***.

Wabi-sabi represents a worldview centered on the acceptance of transience and imperfection. *Wabi-sabi* is a rough, asymmetrical, and simple aesthetic. It's sometimes described as an appreciation for beauty that is "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete." Throughout the coaching relationship, it's your responsibility to hold this vision of wholeness for your client, especially as they make peace with their Shadow.

Self-compassion will help your client relate to themselves the way they'd relate to a dear friend in a time of need.

The practice of self-compassion will bring your client to wholeness by helping them accept and love their Shadow. It will help them meet difficulty with kindness, non-judgment, and a desire to change. It will help them re-own and heal their Shadow.

Your clients may be familiar with the concept of loving kindness meditation. This popular self-care practice is based on Metta, an ancient Buddhist meditation technique.

What is Metta?

Metta typically involves five stages:

1. In the first stage, you feel loving kindness for yourself and focus on feelings of peace, calm, and tranquility.
2. In the second stage, you think of a good friend and consider their good qualities.
3. In the third stage, you think of someone you don't particularly like or dislike, thinking neutral thoughts.

4. In the fourth stage, you try to think of someone you dislike—or are having difficulty with—without getting caught up in negative feelings.
5. In the final stage, you think of all four people together—yourself, the friend, the neutral person, and the enemy. Then, you extend feelings of loving kindness to everyone around you, all creatures and beings.

It's common to repeat a reassuring phrase for each of the stages. These phrases are less of an affirmation and more of a general well-wish—for example, “May I be happy” or “May I be safe.”

Loving kindness meditation offers well-documented benefits such as:

- Heightened capacity for forgiveness
- Greater self-acceptance
- Better emotional regulation

Metta Meditation: May I be happy/ May I be healthy/ May I be free of suffering/ May I live in peace/ May my life be blessed with ease.

Explain to your client that you're going to help them create a loving kindness or personalized self-compassion statement which they may use in meditation or moments of difficulty to combat internal self-talk during moments of judgment.

Many people have a heard of affirmations and positive self-talk, but most don't really know how to engage in compassionate self-talk that feels authentic—especially when confronting their Shadow.

By teaching your client the concept of self-compassion and then guiding them to personalize a self-compassion statement, you'll help them cultivate an especially authentic and meaningful mindful awareness meditation practice—and, ultimately, reclaim their Shadow.

The worksheet: Part 4

It's time to flip to Part 4 of the Shadow Worksheet to help guide your client through the process of returning to wholeness. Here, you'll help your client reclaim their Shadow through self-compassion.

Coach Step 1: Compassionate phrases your client receives

Begin by asking your client to call to mind someone who acts—or has acted—as a mentor or guide. If they're having trouble thinking of someone, you might suggest a few examples:

- A coach, mentor, teacher, or spiritual figure

CHOPRA COACHING
Shadow Worksheet


PART 4 Return to wholeness

4-A: Compassion you receive
Call to mind someone from your life who acts—or has acted—as a mentor or guide. They might be a coach, teacher, spiritual figure, or archetype—anyone you see yourself seeking counsel from during a difficult time. Write down the compassionate phrases or words you know this person would say to you.

4-B: Compassion you give
Now, think about someone who might seek your wise counsel during times of difficulty—someone who typically respects your opinion and often shares with you in confidence. Imagine that they've come to you after uncovering something about their Shadow. Write down compassionate words you might say to them.

4-C: My compassionate statement
Now, pick out key words from all the phrases you've listed above. Put the phrases into a single statement. For example, if you've listed “You are supported” and “Wrap yourself in love,” your statement might be, “May I be supported and wrapped in love.”

Once you've written your statement, sit with it. Close your eyes. Repeat it silently to yourself. Feel its vibration in your heart. If your statement resonates with you, use it like a mantra when you meditate.

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- Someone they don't know but can see themselves seeking counsel from during a difficult time
- A mythical figure, archetype, or pop culture figure who resonates with them

Remind your client that the important thing is that they see this person as a confidant—someone whom they can trust and who they know would want the best for them, even when they're in their Shadow.

Begin with a guided visualization.

Use your intuition as a meditation teacher to guide a short visualization. Share these instructions with your client.

Step 1: Visualize the person you trust.

Picture this person's face in front of you. Notice a compassionate expression on their face and in their eyes.



Step 2: Imagine approaching the person.

Imagine you've come to them, wanting to share about your Shadow. You've just uncovered something about yourself that's hard to be with—something you'd prefer not to own.

Step 3: Visualize yourself sharing your Shadow.

Imagine you've shared what's written on your worksheet with them—you've just laid it out there and are awaiting their response.



Coach Step 2: Compassionate phrases your client gives

Continue on with the worksheet. Have your client call to mind someone who might seek their counsel during a difficult time. They might think of a sibling, neighbor, coworker, or friend—someone who trusts them and typically respects their opinion.

You can guide your client in a similar visualization to Step 1. Ask them to imagine that this person has just come to them after uncovering something unpleasant about their Shadow. They may be a little distraught or unsure of what to make of things. They're looking for your client's compassion.

Ask your client to write down the compassionate phrases they would say to this loved one. Remind them again that there are no right or wrong phrases—they can just notice what comes up and let it flow.

Coach Step 3: Your client's compassionate phrase

Move on to coach your client through creating a personal self-compassion statement that they can use during meditation. Ask them to pick out key words from all the phrases they listed in the previous two steps of the worksheet. Then, invite them to put the phrases into a statement.

You might refer to the example phrases common in loving kindness meditations:

1. May I be happy.
2. May I be healthy.
3. May I be free of suffering.
4. May I live in peace.
5. May my life be blessed with ease.

Ask your client to write a self-compassion meditation statement starting with, "May I..."

Now, invite them to close their eyes and sit with the statement. Guide them to repeat it silently inside their mind. Ask if they feel its vibration in their heart. Ask how it resonates with them.

Tell your client that they may use their statement like a mantra when they meditate. And any time they realize they're acting or thinking unkindly about themselves, they can use it to draw themselves back into a space of greater self-love.

Integrating the Shadow

You've coached your client on how to identify their Shadow and given them the tools to approach it with compassion.

Now, it's time to help them integrate their Shadow. This won't always be smooth sailing. There will be times when your client comes up against their Shadow and loses their sense of self-compassion, faith, or connection to their true nature. By asking a few powerful questions, you can help them prepare to use the essence of their self-compassion statement in daily life.

Ask your clients questions to help them connect with the essence of their statement.

- When can you see yourself using your compassionate statement in daily life?
- What can you do to hold onto the light within the Shadow?
- How will you continued to move toward compassionate right action when your Shadow emerges?
- Looking back on the list of people you initially judged, what's shifted?

Some clients accept and release their Shadow in a single session.

For others, it's a longer process which requires a slow reconditioning of their thoughts, habits, and instincts. Your client may be working to abandon a fixed mindset in favor of a growth mindset, and that journey takes

time. But regardless of what your client's relationship to their Shadow looks like at the end of the Shadow work session, some exploration around continued self-compassion is useful.

Shadow Contingency Plan

Prepare your clients for the unknown.

To prepare your clients for unexpected obstacles and momentary setbacks, revisit the concept of the contingency plan that you learned in the Intention cornerstone. Remember the If/Then Statements.

In Shadow work, an example of a contingency plan might be:

- "If something comes up around my Shadow..."
- Then I'll use mindful awareness to observe my thoughts and emotions."

You can also help your client write an open statement:

- "If you find you're judging..."
- Then you will..."

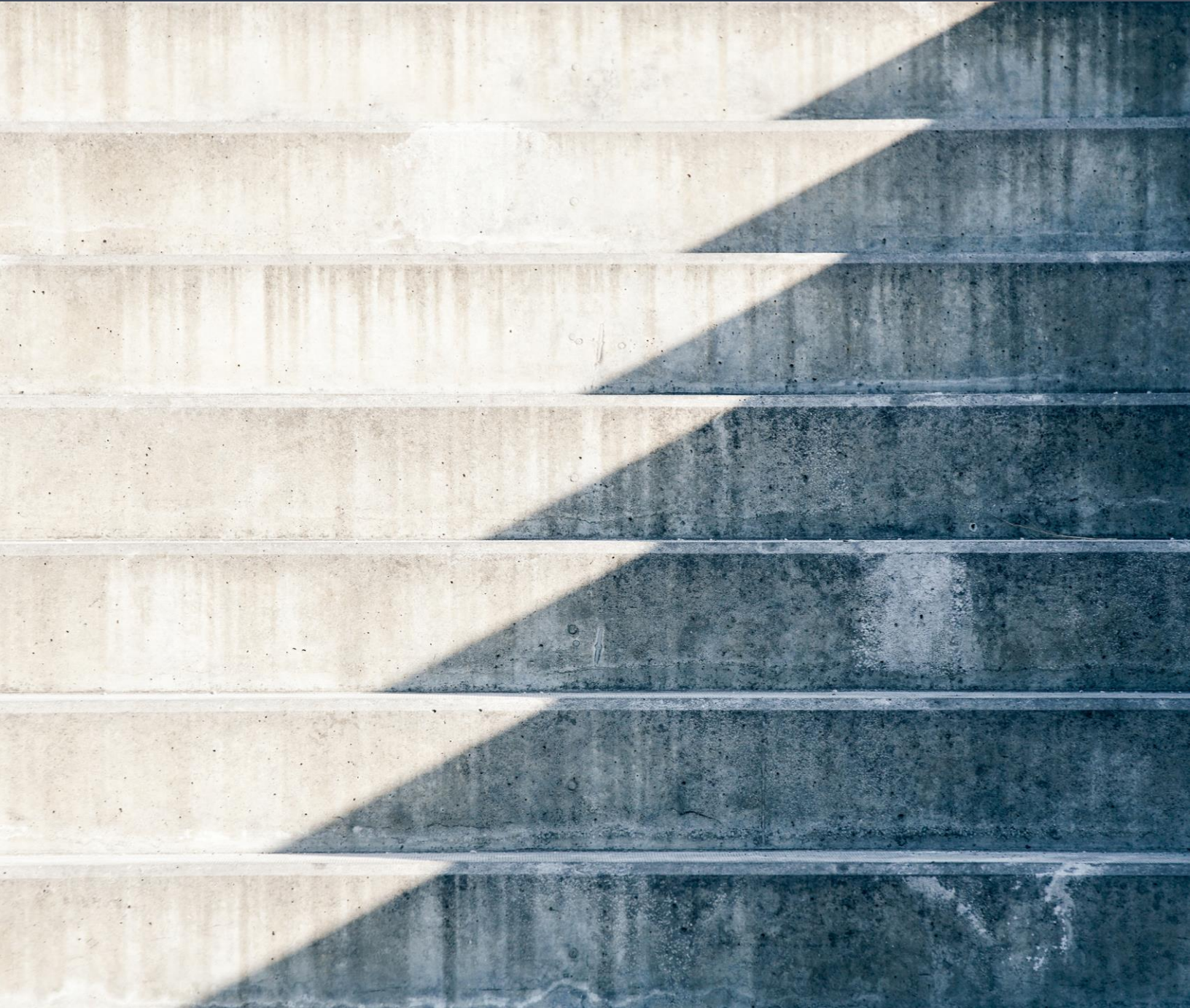
Ask your clients a few questions when helping them create their contingency plan.

- How can you use mindful awareness to observe thoughts and emotions when things come up around your Shadow?
- What can you do to remind yourself that you're more than your Shadow?

If your client struggles to come up with a plan, here are a few suggestions you can try:

- Encourage them to complete the Shadow Worksheet again on their own.
- Recommend that they say the mantra "Tat Tvam Asi" to themselves and embody the concept that "they too are that."

Once you've got them thinking, ask if one of these suggestions resonates. Or perhaps they'll be ready to come up with a compassionate way of working with the Shadow on their own.



Shadow - Improv

Shadow—Improv

Introduction to Emotions

Emotions are vehicles of transformation.

At a fundamental level, all emotions stem from a sense of comfort or discomfort. Emotional responses support these two needs.

On one hand...

1. Fear in response to danger results in caution.
2. Anger in response to injustice can indicate that a situation needs to change.
3. Affection for family and friends promotes connection and close relationships.

On the other hand, exaggerated, inappropriate, or maladaptive emotional responses, though intended to decrease levels of discomfort, may negatively impact well-being. For example...

1. Fear or panic can activate survival instincts which are harmful to career advancement if expressed during a high-stakes meeting or presentation.
2. Anger intended to elicit change—especially when directed toward a person, a circumstance, or oneself—can actually sabotage the desired change.
3. Affection that typically brings about healthy family connections may need to be regulated if felt inappropriately for a married coworker.

Introduction to Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is an effective way to work with clients' unconsciously repressed emotions.

It can also help your clients accurately interpret and respond appropriately to the emotions of other people.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize what emotion you're feeling and to manage that emotion in a way that benefits you.

Emotional intelligence is a fundamental element of human behavior that is distinct from the intellect. In fact, there's no known connection between cognitive and emotional intelligence. Rather, emotional intelligence is a flexible set of skills that your clients can acquire and improve with practice.

During your coaching career, you'll notice that some clients are naturally more emotionally intelligent than others, while others may struggle to develop this skill. By developing your own emotional intelligence—and practicing understanding, support, and empathy for those who struggle with it—you can coach your clients to develop this skillset even if they don't naturally have a high capacity for it.

The Value of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace. Emotional intelligence helps workers better understand, relate to, and effectively communicate with their colleagues.

It's the strongest driver of workplace leadership—having been linked to better teamwork, creativity, retention, and acceptance of change.

Emotional intelligence is a top priority for clients who want thriving relationships. Emotionally intelligent people often enjoy better interpersonal relationships.

Emotionally intelligent people can better read and empathize with the emotions of loved ones. They can also better understand and regulate their own emotional impulses. They're aware of and can take responsibility for how their actions and reactions impact the emotions of others.

Imagine the world we'd live in if everyone were just a bit more emotionally intelligent. Now, take a moment to recognize that you've chosen a profession that can help this vision become reality.

Throughout the coaching process, your clients will emotionally evolve.

Self-awareness, discernment, agency, and self-regulation are the mechanisms behind the emotional responses that can increase abundance and enhance well-being. The coaching work you're doing with your clients will naturally move them closer to revealing unconscious emotions and limiting beliefs—and now that you've been introduced to emotional intelligence as a concept, you'll see opportunities to explicitly coach your clients toward it.

Indicators to coach emotional intelligence may be:

- The client is cut off from their emotions and seems numb, flat, or unaffected by emotional events.
- The client is emotionally hyper-sensitive—to the point where their emotions get in the way of relating to others, expressing their purpose, or following through on their intentions.
- The client is aware of an emotion but doesn't know how to accurately identify or respond to it.
- The client is confused about how to respond to the emotions of others.

Whether you explicitly use the term “emotional intelligence” or not, coaching around this topic will help your clients emotionally evolve.

Coaching Emotional Intelligence Skills

By coaching your clients toward greater emotional intelligence, you'll help them develop four key skills:

1. Self-awareness to recognize their emotions
2. Discernment to understand and process unresolved emotions
3. Agency to appropriately apply emotions
4. Self-regulation to manage emotions and behaviors



Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence

The Duality of Consciousness

Emotions are often unconscious.

Conventional wisdom says the brain has two independent systems. In this thinking, the emotional side is instinctive, feeling pain and pleasure, while the rational side deliberates, analyzes, and looks into the future. Psychologists and neuroscientists have learned a lot about these two systems, but the wisdom traditions have always been aware of this tension.

The Bhagavad Gita is an ancient Vedic text. It tells a story centered around a chariot, the horses, the passenger, and charioteer.

- The chariot represents the body.
- The horses represent the mind.
- The passenger is Arjuna, who represents the conditioned individual soul.
- The charioteer is Lord Krishna, who represents the true self.

Freud's theory describes the three aspects of the psyche.

Sigmund Freud wrote about the selfish id, the conscientious superego, and the realistic ego.

- The id represents our primitive and instinctual desires.
- The superego operates as a moral conscience.
- The ego plans and thinks beyond the moment—mediating the desires of the id and the superego.

Other common metaphors include the tale of the rider and the elephant, which you learned about in Session 10, and the image of a massive iceberg barely poking above the ocean's surface.

All these illustrations point to a duality of the conscious and unconscious.

The first step in any Chopra Coaching client's transformation is to make the unconscious conscious. This involves exploring the body, mind, and spirit as taught in the Vedic tradition; recognizing the power and impact of the emotional elephant; and seeing the iceberg from below the water's surface.

Emotions in the Body

Emotions are experienced as sensations in the body, associated with thoughts in the mind.

Although less tangible and more difficult to identify, emotions have a qualia. With mindful awareness, for example:

- Sadness can form a knot in the throat.
- Anxiety can feel like a fluttering in the chest.
- Embarrassment can feel hot on the face.

In the Meaning cornerstone, you learned about the concept of interoceptive awareness.

Interoceptive awareness is what allows your client to perceive internal, subtle bodily sensations.

The greater a person's capacity for interoceptive awareness is, the more easily they can feel, know, and respond to an emotion in real-time.

Coming up, you'll learn how somatic processing can help your clients become more aware of their emotions by leaning into the body's wisdom. But first, let's look at how mindful awareness can increase emotional awareness.

Emotions in the Mind

Mindful awareness increases emotional awareness.

Throughout the coaching relationship, you'll help your clients develop mindful awareness by asking powerful questions, offering reflections, and encouraging them to meditate regularly.

Asking questions and offering reflections around emotionally charged topics can help you and your client get a clearer view of what they're experiencing. Encourage them to face emotions with curiosity, rather than repressing or denying them.

By using powerful questions, you can help clients dig deeper into their emotions than they normally would. As they hear themselves share a more detailed account of the embodied experience of an emotion, they can more fully understand the emotionally charged experience.

The questions aren't complicated—you might start with something as simple as, "How does that make you feel?"

Introduction to Discernment

When fully investigated, the nature of emotions can be revealed.

Emotions, once held in awareness and mindfully investigated, can be known and understood. As your client better understands the nature of their emotions—and the thoughts associated with the emotions—they're likely to gain some insights.

What's there to know about emotions?

- Resisting emotions is futile.
- Emotions can be named.
- Emotions are transient.
- Emotions are fused with meaning.
- Emotions cover unmet needs.

Resisting Emotions

Discernment: Resisting emotions is futile.

Resisting emotions is a natural reaction that helps us avoid pain. This reaction has been culturally reinforced throughout our lives—we’ve been told, “Suck it up,” “Big kids don’t cry,” and “Life is pain.” Since childhood, we’ve been conditioned to minimize, reject, and ignore our emotions.

Yet research shows that moving away from emotions through distraction, denial, or suppression can lead to emotional rebound, delayed healing, and the unconscious development of poor coping strategies.

You may have heard the phrases, “What you resist will persist” and “What you can feel you can heal.” It may sound counterintuitive, but the coaching conversation is meant to move clients closer to their difficult emotions—not farther away. They can then find healing and, ultimately, wholeness.

Naming Emotions

Discernment: Emotions can be named.

Having a limited emotional vocabulary actually limits the emotional experiences that your client can express. You might point out to them that the more paint colors an artist has, the more artistically expressed they can be. Similarly, the more emotion-related words your client knows, the more emotionally expressed they can feel. As the saying goes, “What you name you can tame.”

If you think your client may have room to expand their emotional vocabulary, you might share a list of emotions with them. The Gottman Institute has developed the Feeling Wheel, which is a fantastic resource you may want to share with your client if they’re having trouble developing their emotional vocabulary. A copy has been provided for you in your Program Downloads. The more labels they have for feelings, the more feelings they’ll be able to identify in themselves and communicate to others.

To help your clients start naming their emotions, you might invite them to ask themselves a few questions:

- What happened?
- What am I feeling?
- What do I need that I’m not receiving?
- What am I asking for?
- What is the gift or opportunity in this situation?

When discussing a client’s emotions, help them use nonvictimizing language to describe how they’re feeling.

You might refer to the Conscious Communication Word Lists available in your Chopra Health teacher’s manual. **As you know, there are three lists which may help your students identify and name their emotions:**

1. Words that express how we feel when our needs are being met
2. Words that express how we feel when our needs are not being met
3. Words that express feelings of victimization and are best avoided

Building an emotional vocabulary will empower your clients to own and process whatever they're feeling.

Explain to your client that while expanding their emotional vocabulary will help empower them to process their feelings, it will not make anyone else change their behavior. This is an opportunity for your client to practice focusing on what is in their control and releasing that which is not.

Riding the Waves of Emotions

Discernment: Emotions are transient.

Your client's emotions will come and go according to their own rhythm—whether your client likes it or not.

According to neuroscientist Jill Bolte-Taylor, the physiological lifespan of an emotion in the body and brain is 90 seconds. The sensations—adrenaline, heat in the face, tightness in the throat, rapid heartbeat, and so on—arise, peak, and dissipate on their own in this short period.

You can coach your clients to surf the waves of emotions. Once they've made initial contact with an emotion, you'll guide them to:

- Keep feeling the emotion in silence.
- Let you know when it's increased or decreased in intensity.
- Report if it's moved somewhere else in the body.
- Sit with it, paying full attention to its sensations.
- Let you know when it's gone.

Finding Meaning in Emotions

Discernment: Emotions are fused with meaning.

Ninety seconds is enough time for your client to process and release an emotion—but only if you can coach them to stop feeding the story behind it.

Often, clients get stuck in emotional feedback loops wherein the negative, fear-based story around an emotion keeps their negative experience cycling. But if they can drop the story and sit with the bare sensations, the emotion will pass.

As you learned in Health Certification, emotions are sensations in the body that are associated with thoughts in the mind. The thoughts can be a story or a belief from the ego mind. The story is what determines your client's level of suffering.

In the Meaning cornerstone, we described the difference between pain and suffering.

- Pain is how emotion feels in the body.
- Suffering is the pessimistic story that's told about the pain.

If you can coach your client to drop the story they're telling about an emotion and simply sit with it, they can start to settle down. Eventually, they'll see the emotion with greater clarity and wisdom.

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is a choice. This common phrase doesn't mean your client deserves any emotional pain that comes their way—but they do have a choice on how they handle it.

Uncovering Emotional Needs

Discernment: Emotions cover unmet needs.

Asking powerful questions will help you and your client identify when there's an unmet need under an emotion they're feeling. Sometimes it's a core need for something like safety and belonging. Other times, it's a superficial need like a sandwich or a nap.

Hot emotions like anger and frustration are typically defensive in nature—trying to protect a more vulnerable emotion, such as sadness or shame. Underneath sadness is often a need to feel loved and supported. Behind shame is your client's need to feel connected and accepted in their wholeness.

But there's no way for you to intuit what needs are below your client's emotions. Instead of playing a guessing game, engage in a direct inquiry:

Ask the sensation itself what it needs.

If you ask your client directly what they need, they'll probably answer from their head—telling you what they think they should need. Or they might talk themselves out of needing anything at all because they're telling the story that they should be able to handle the situation on their own.

Therefore, it's often more valuable to direct questions straight to the emotion in your client's body. Have them ask the sensation what it needs, then truly listen for its answer.

If your client is still having trouble coming up with the needs behind their emotion, you can ask them if their emotions might be searching for one of Deepak's four A's:

- Attention
- Affection
- Appreciation
- Acceptance

Often one of these needs is the underlying need that is not being met.

Introduction to Agency

Teach your clients to relate to their emotions as a source of data. Once your clients know how to be aware of and understand their emotions, you can coach them to relate to their emotions as a form of data. This data can then inform them on how to live in alignment with their purpose and well-being vision.

Explain to your client that emotions are their body's natural feedback system. It's the language their body uses to communicate what it wants—and what it doesn't. While unpleasant emotions like anger communicate that something needs to be processed and alert your client to unmet needs, pleasant emotions tell them to savor the moment and seek more of whatever it is they're enjoying. Understanding their emotions can help your client develop a greater sense of agency—a sense of choice or capacity to intentionally respond in a way that exercises their will or volition. A greater sense of agency empowers them to make better choices.

Tools for Making Tough Choices

Choices can be difficult, but some decision-making tools may benefit your clients.

The mind often loops around endless lists of pros and cons, never feeling confident in a particular choice. If you sense a client is experiencing this, you can ask them to check in with their emotional body. Have your client:

- Play out one scenario and then the other in their imagination.
- Drop down into their heart, inquiring about the emotions that come up.
- Answer the question, "What would you choose based only on emotion?"
- Answer the question, "If your head and heart wanted the best for you, what would they choose together?"

This exercise unites the head and heart. It can bring clarity toward one of two choices your client is considering—or uncover an unexpected third.

Emotions and Intuition

Greater emotional intelligence correlates to a stronger sense of intuition. Intuition, like emotions, is a feeling in the body. It's not a dynamic and detailed sensation, like joy or sadness—it's more a clarity of knowing, a felt sense of resonance or dissonance in the body.

Intuition is when the gut or heart communicates an obvious "yes" or "no."

Emotions often connect with intuition, but not always in a predictable way. Your client's gut might have a profound sense of clarity and alignment with what it intuitively knows is true. But if that truth is difficult—requiring your client to experience sacrifice or discomfort—the emotions might still be unpleasant. As your client develops greater mindfulness, they'll become better at holding emotional and intuitive complexity.

It's possible for your client to have a feeling of intuitive resonance while also feeling an emotional cocktail of sadness, regret, and excitement. This doesn't have to be a conflict if you can coach your client to hold space for it all.

Emotional Patterns

Emotions offer insight into patterns of self-sabotage.

You can help your clients access emotion and intuition to empower healthy choice-making, but emotions can also be an obstacle to following through on their intentions. For example, consider a client who's just committed to a home practice of not eating right before bed—yet finds themselves standing by the refrigerator late the next night, holding their third slice of cold, leftover pizza.

In your next coaching session, when you ask what happened, your client might offer a self-judgmental excuse to rationalize their perceived shortcoming: “I’m undisciplined,” “I’m weak,” or “I have no self-control.” But even if they don’t realize it, there’s likely a specific emotion buried beneath their self-sabotage.

As a coach, this is where you get curious. When a client comes to you despairing over what they deem as a personal failing, start asking questions.

Ask about the emotions they experience before and while making choices.

- What triggered you earlier in the day?
- What was the emotion you had right before you decided to make this choice?
- What was the emotion you had while you were making this choice?

Your client may not have much insight to report.

If your client’s awareness was offline at the time of the regression, they may not have much insight during the session. If this is the case, challenge your client to be mindful in the future about not being mindful. Ask them to pay extra attention to what emotions they feel right before they have the impulse to sabotage an intention.

Remember, let them know you have no judgment around whether they’re successful or not. Emphasize that you just want them to have insight around how emotions impact their actions—especially actions they say they really want to take.

Introduction to Self-regulation

Self-regulation is the ability to monitor and manage emotions.

No matter what is happening emotionally in the body or mind, self-regulation helps your client find a steady state of balance from within.

Without mindfulness, seeking comfort or positive emotions can turn into craving and addiction. Moving away from discomfort or negative emotions, meanwhile, can lead to states of fighting or fleeing.

Self-regulation is the ability to manage emotions, thoughts, and behaviors—regardless of external events—in ways that honor one’s values and lead to greater well-being.

The science of self-regulation

While the brain's anterior cingulate cortex and insula are responsible for the interoceptive awareness needed to perceive emotions, self-regulation of an emotion and the proceeding behavior is linked to the prefrontal cortex—often called the brain's executive control center.

Mindful awareness, meditation, and yoga are all linked not only to greater interoceptive awareness, but also to greater executive control—what we often call "willpower." So, perceiving and understanding an emotion are important first steps, but ultimately, your client must cultivate the ability to respond appropriately as soon as an emotion arises. This involves learning when and how to take new, healthy action—and how to cease taking unhealthy action.

People with higher levels of self-regulation typically also possess a greater capacity for discipline, self-control, and delayed gratification.

More disciplined people generally pursue their life goals with more grit and enthusiasm. And according to research by social psychologist Roy Baumeister, people who score high in tests of self-control and delayed gratification generally:

- Have a healthier weight and better fitness.
- Have better mental and overall health.
- Achieve greater academic and career success.
- Engage in less risky behavior.
- Are more resilient in the face of challenges.

Coaching Self-regulation

Some clients are fully aware of their emotions, but aren't yet integrating that awareness.

How do you coach a client when they're aware of their emotions—and how those emotions impede their well-being—but haven't yet integrated the awareness into new behavior?

- Consider a client who's fully aware that they're:
 - Self-medicating with nicotine or alcohol because of social anxiety and a feeling that they don't fit in.
 - Arguing with their spouse because they feel financially insecure and helpless to improve their income.
 - Skipping meditations because they're afraid if they slow down they'll have to feel their emotions.
 - Going to sleep late because they resent that they're taking care of others all day and the only "me time" they get is after everyone else goes to bed.

There's no easy answer to any of these scenarios, and the solution will vary by client. Remember, they're still the expert in their own life, and change happens on their watch. That said, you have everything you need to empower your client—provided they're ready for the work.

Effective self-regulation coaching relies on home practices.

Once your client is aware of their emotions and their impact on well-being, progress is a matter of repetition and reinforcement. Your client will experience most of their life outside your coaching sessions. From here, coaching around self-regulation is primarily about helping them develop personal resources and strategies.

They can then employ these tools as home practice experiments between coaching sessions. Over time, with dedicated and consistent effort, they'll integrate greater self-regulation into their daily life—benefitting their relationships, work, and overall well-being.

"The gift of discipline is that it has the power to take you beyond the reasoning of temporary emotion to freedom... The combination of love for something with the willingness to do what it takes to practice it—discipline—results in freedom." -Reverend Michael Beckwith

Integrating Emotional Intelligence

Help your client integrate greater emotional intelligence into their daily life.

There are a few key ways you can help your client integrate emotional intelligence. Help them:

1. **Identify** and **ritualize** emotional triggers.
2. **Feel** their emotions and surf the waves.
3. **Observe** and **label** their emotions.
4. **Question** their emotions.
5. **Reframe** their emotions.

Home practices to integrate emotional intelligence

Here's how you can help your clients hone these emotional intelligence tools through home practices between coaching sessions.

Practice 1: Identifying emotional triggers

What it's for: Helping your client identify and ritualize emotional triggers

How to guide your client: Use powerful questions to help your client identify potential emotional triggers that might come up, or you can help them create an if/then statement.

Take, for example, a client who knows they'll soon have to have a hard conversation with a colleague. They might create a statement like this:

- "If I know I'll be having a difficult discussion with a coworker... "
- "Then I'll treat it like a conversation meditation."

You might encourage this client to be as present as they can to their emotions during the conversation—and to use their breath to ground their energy whenever they feel things bubbling up.

Practice 2: Feeling emotions with equanimity

What it's for: Helping your client feel their emotions and surf the waves

How to guide your client: Remind your client that an emotion only lasts 90 seconds—and that “what they feel they can heal.” See if they’re willing to experiment with setting a timer for 90 seconds each time the feeling arises this week. Invite them to fully feel the difficult emotion with equanimity until the timer goes off. If 90 seconds is too long, see if they’re willing to try a similar practice for just three breaths.

Practice 3: Observing and labeling emotions

What it's for: Helping your client dis-identify with challenging emotions

How to guide your client: Encourage your client to name challenging emotions as soon as they arise. Ask them to mentally label any strong emotion they feel coming on, then then—silently or out loud—say:

“I feel [emotion], but I am not [emotion].”

This will help your clients observe the emotion as something that is happening to them but doesn’t define them.

Practice 4: Questioning emotions

What it's for: Helping your client recognize that under each emotion is an unmet need

How to guide your client: Invite your client to pause and ask a question each time they feel a strong emotion. Explain that they’ll need to pause long enough to relax the nervous system, access what their heart truly needs, and shift from constricted to expanded awareness.

After they’ve paused, tell them to ask themselves, “What do I really need right now?” Encourage them to think of a micro-action and then offer themselves whatever that might be.

Practice 5: Reframing emotions

What it's for: Helping your client reframe triggering emotions and use them as an opportunity to engage in self-care activities

How to guide your client: Show your client how to plan ahead so they have access to a few self-care activities in emotionally triggering times.

They’ll want to start by asking themselves to think about, write down, or journal what soothes them when they’re emotionally raw. Give them a few suggestions—for example, maybe they feel better after having a massage, watching a movie, reading a book, or picking up the phone to chat with a friend.

Then, ask how they can prepare these things to help them through an emotional episode. Again, you may offer ideas here. You might suggest that they put aside a massage fund, keep their favorite movie queued up, place a good book on their nightstand, or text a friend to let them know they'll be calling more often to chat.

Encourage your client to put this list somewhere especially visible. This way, when they feel triggered, they can easily access the list and take action to practice self-care.

Ask your clients to keep a record of the practices that best serve and support them.



The Shadow of Positive Emotions

The Shadow of Positive Emotions

The Shadow of Positive Emotions

Clients may judge their positive emotions. Dark and negative emotions aren't the only ones that can become Shadow energy—even your client's strengths and successes can be repressed and disowned.

You'll notice when a client is having a difficult time receiving acknowledgment, accepting compliments, or celebrating big wins. They might get squirmy when you make a big deal out of their accomplishments, quickly turning the praise back on you as their coach or toward someone else in their life as the “real” reason for their success.

Humility can be a powerful spiritual quality, but there's a distinction between someone who has their ego in check and someone who can't be with their own Light.

Rejection of the Light can also show itself in your client's judgments of others—perhaps those who are successful, wealthy, attractive, or living big lives on their own terms. A client may play small out of a fear of success, being seen, or getting hurt. There may be an unconscious motto under the surface: “The smaller you are, the softer you'll fall.”

You can help your client own their Light by walking them through the same process you learned for owning negative Shadow emotions. This can be a celebratory process of reclaiming comfort and positive emotions with love, success, and abundance.

Negative Bias

Give your client an overview of negativity bias. The brain is wired for negative emotions. This is due to evolutionary psychology—we inherited a negativity bias from our caveman ancestors. Because of this, it's natural for us to pay more attention to negative experiences and emotions than to positive ones.

You can probably think of examples from your own life where this has been true. For example, maybe the conversation was flowing throughout your last practice coaching session—until you got stuck at the end. If you've found yourself focusing more on that tiny setback than on the parts of the session that went great, your negativity bias is doing its job.

"The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences, but Teflon for positive ones." -Dr. Rick Hanson

Long ago, survival required the prioritization of negative information. Ignoring the signs of a neighbor's kindness may cause you to lose a friend—but ignoring the signs of an oncoming car can result in the loss of life.

Negativity bias is supported by science. As you learned in the Meaning cornerstone, negativity bias comes from the amygdala, which is part of the default mode network. Psychologist and happiness researcher Rick Hanson shares in his work that the amygdala is primed to find the negative. In fact, this part of the brain uses two-thirds of its neuronal power to search for bad news.

Once the amygdala finds the negative, the fight-flight-freeze response is triggered, and the adverse event immediately becomes a memory.

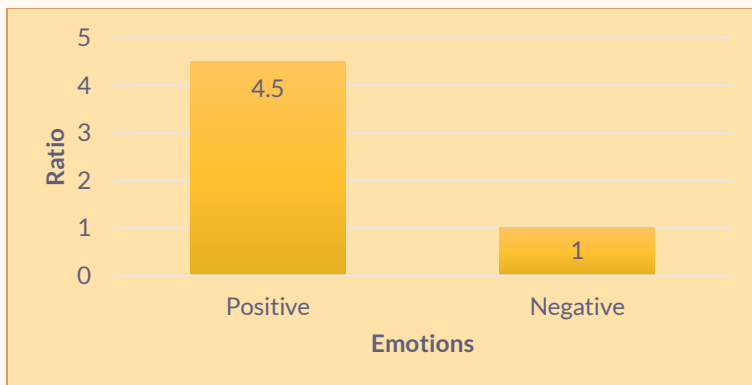
Storing a positive memory takes longer than storing a negative one. Hanson's research suggests that in order to store a positive experience in the memory, one must hold the feeling for more than 12 seconds.

So, people tend to blow negative information and events out of proportion, while minimizing—or even forgetting—positive events.

The brain can be trained to feel more positive emotions. Luckily, as Hanson shares, research also shows that with practice, the brain can be intentionally trained to improve our outlook and attitude, creating an emotionally brighter experience.

This is another example of how coaching contributes to conscious evolution, which you learned about in the Meaning cornerstone. You're essentially helping clients upgrade their brains to a place of greater relaxation and joy.

Upgrading the brain requires real commitment. Positive psychologist Barbara Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory suggests that in order for people to maintain a state of total well-being, they must experience a ratio of at least three to one—three positive emotions for every negative emotion—sometimes even as much as six to one.



Coaching Positive Emotions

You might be tempted to spend more time working through negative emotions than positive ones.

As a new coach, it's common to focus extra attention on your client's negative emotions. Two archetypes which are common among coaches can help us understand why.

- The healer archetype naturally tends to pursue that which needs healing.
- The light worker archetype is gifted at finding the Shadow and bringing illumination.

You may experience a strong subconscious drive to seek out your client's difficulties to reinforce your coaching strengths of compassion and wisdom.

Seeking out your clients' difficulties can serve you well in most cases, but remember to also look for that which is already light, whole, and positive.

Remember to spend time celebrating your clients' wins and bringing as much attention to the embodiment of their positive emotions as you bring to their negative ones. When your client reports a success, you can coach them to embody their emotions and learn from the experience to keep momentum moving in the right direction.

Taking in the Good

Taking in the good, as described by Hanson, is a way to turn up the volume on positive emotions.

Taking in the good involves inviting your client to immerse themselves as long as they can in their feelings of joy, accomplishment, authenticity, gratitude, and fulfillment.

You'll want to guide them to hold their attention on the sensations of uplift in their spine, openness in their heart, brightness in their face, and ease throughout their being. Have them intentionally turn up the volume on these sensations and commit the moment to memory.

At some point, your client may become too attached to positive emotions. If your client gets too attached to feeling the positive emotions of a particular experience, there will be a feeling of disappointment when the experience ends. This could lead them to get caught up in trying to replicate it.

Coach your clients to fully savor positive emotions in the moment, then gracefully let them go once it has passed. At the end of every positive emotion, there's a new moment that also deserves your client's presence. As you give, you receive.

Sympathetic Joy

Share sympathetic joy for your client. Every time your client savors a positive emotion, there's an opportunity for you to savor a positive emotion too.

Mudita: There's a Buddhist practice called Mudita, which translates to "sympathetic joy."

Mudita is an intentional feeling of joy for someone else's good fortune. It's said to be the antidote to envy, jealousy, and unhealthy competition.

Because you've likely played a part in your client's well-being progress, it should be fairly easy to feel positive emotions for their success. But you can master the practice of Mudita outside your coaching sessions.

You might practice it:

- While scrolling on social media.

- With those to whom you would typically compare yourself.
- To turn around or counteract feelings of jealousy or envy.

A positive psychology practice which closely resembles Mudita is strength spotting. Strength spotting: The intentional practice of noticing and naming the qualities of others when they're at their best.

The next time your client shares a success, cultivate as much joy for them as you can feel. And if it's appropriate, encourage them to do the same for other people in their life.



Addressing Microtrauma

Addressing Microtrauma

Introduction to Microtrauma

How does therapy compare to coaching? Your client may take any of several routes toward self-improvement—such as online courses, self-help apps, therapy, and more. The difference between therapy and coaching has been illustrated on a 0 to 5 scale:

- **Therapy** takes a patient from a **-5 to a 0**.
- **Coaching** takes a client from a **0 to a 5**.

Therapy and coaching are distinct practices which require different expertise.

On one hand, therapists often help their clients manage specific mental health conditions, develop coping skills for daily life, and process past traumatic experiences. Their work with clients can be short-term or ongoing. They may specialize in counseling certain populations, such as children, veterans, or survivors of intimate violence. They may also have expertise in a particular area, such as behavioral health, grief counseling, or substance abuse. Often, therapists are part of a larger treatment team which may include a psychiatrist or primary care provider.

Coaches, on the other hand, focus on a client's present and future—rarely delving into the past. They support clients in their journey toward overall well-being, typically on a relatively short-term basis. They guide each client toward a deeper understanding of their own purpose, worldview, and inner self. Ultimately, this leads to personal transformation at the mind, body, and spirit levels.

Of course, there is some overlap. For example, both therapists and coaches help clients bolster their confidence, build their emotional intelligence, and improve their decision-making skills. Additionally, both professionals witness a wide range of emotions throughout the process.

As you may have already observed in yourself and your practice clients, emotions can range quite a bit from the start to the end of one 45-minute session. Emotions are dynamic, and it's natural—even healthy—to have some swing.

The Spectrum of Emotion

A full spectrum of emotion isn't always a sign that a client needs therapy.

In a coaching relationship that lasts six months, it's possible you'll see the full spectrum of emotion—all the way from below 1 to above 5. This wide range of emotion isn't always a sign that your client needs therapy. A client who is at or below a -2, for example, may be coachable if they're in a temporarily low state due to unfortunate events or a challenging but short-term situation.

As a coach, it's your job to watch out for emotional trends. The following trends may be signs that your client needs the tools of a therapist:

1. Your client's emotional baseline is below a -1.
2. Your client consistently swings back and forth between extreme highs and extreme lows from session to session.
3. Your client's emotional reactions are regularly out of proportion to the stressor.
4. Emotions are chronically keeping your client from moving forward.
5. Your client expresses emotions that you as their coach aren't comfortable with.
6. Your client has confided an unprocessed trauma such as assault, abuse, or addiction.

If you notice any of these trends in your client, it may be best to refer them to a licensed therapist.

That said, as a Chopra Coach, you'll have the tools needed to work with clients who have experienced the inevitable microtraumas of everyday life.

Coaching microtraumas

You can help your clients process the microtraumas of everyday life.

In the context of physical injuries, we know there's a spectrum—for example, having a stress knot in your back isn't nearly as severe as having a broken spine. The first can be treated by a massage therapist, but the second may require a neurosurgeon.

Your role as a Chopra Coach is like being a massage therapist for emotional microtrauma. Break-ups, let-downs, failures, and missed opportunities are all an inescapable part of your clients' lives, but they take an emotional toll over time. These microtraumas have been accumulating from childhood through adulthood.

Because many microtraumas happen in the context of family, school, or work, your clients may have ignored or justified them for the sake of keeping the peace in their relationships. But there's a cost to your clients for keeping that so-called peace.

Consequences of Microtrauma

Repressed microtraumas can negatively impact your client.

The accumulation of repressed microtraumas, when left unprocessed, can lead to imbalance and significantly impact your client's well-being. You learned in your Health Certification that these unresolved stories and emotions are emotional ama—or toxicity—and this ama can be released.

The intention of coaching microtrauma is to restore the nervous system's ability to self-regulate. The successful processing of trauma is known as post-traumatic growth.

Post-traumatic growth: A positive change experienced as a result of the struggle with a major life crisis or a traumatic event.

Post-traumatic growth can occur in coaching after your client has fully experienced, accepted, and released the emotions around a microtrauma which they previously repressed. They're then able to make new meaning of the traumatic or challenging experience, approaching it with a growth mindset or framing it from a spiritual perspective.

As your client experiences post-traumatic growth, they'll begin to realize:

1. That their challenge has made them more resilient.
2. How it's contributed to their evolution—helping them become the stronger, more spiritually connected person they are today.

The process of reaching this state, though, takes work—because there's no way around your client's emotions. Eventually, you must go through them together—but don't charge into an emotional storm without a proverbial umbrella. There are two directions to go with a client who is experiencing an emotional charge: through it, or away from it. You'll need to know when to help them lean in and process the emotion—and when to have them mindfully set it aside for a moment.

Familiarity with the window of tolerance concept will help you decide which direction your client needs to go.

The Window of Tolerance

Your clients have an optimal emotional space where they thrive in life. You can help your clients access a zone where intense emotional arousal can be processed in a healthy way. This zone was termed the window of tolerance by psychiatrist Dan Siegel in his 1999 book, *The Developing Mind*.

Window of tolerance: Originally described as the optimal zone of arousal where your client is able to manage and thrive in everyday life.

Siegel uses the analogy of sailing within a river of well-being. You can also use this illustration to explain the concept to your clients.

- When your client is within their window of tolerance, they're able to respond to all that comes their way without getting blown off course.
- When they're outside their window of tolerance, their ship is jostled by each obstacle they sail past.

When your client finds themselves outside their window of tolerance and overwhelmed by their emotions, their nervous system responds by going into survival mode. Typically, they unconsciously enter either hyperarousal (fight mode) or hypo-arousal (flight mode). In both of these states, they experience constricted awareness.

The window of tolerance can be narrow or wide. It's different for every client, and it changes throughout their lives. As a Chopra Coach, you'll look to widen your client's window of tolerance so they can enjoy smoother sailing from a place of expanded awareness—regardless of what emotional waves, obstacles, and adventures come their way.

The first step in helping your client widen their window is to sense their level of energetic arousal.

Energetic Arousal

Sense your client's energetic arousal level. Energetic arousal is the qualia of emotional stress in the body.

1. You can practice sensing your client's energetic arousal level during any session by assessing whether they're in a state of hyperarousal or hypo-arousal.
2. Hyperarousal is a wound-up, tense, or edgy state. Your client might respond to questions with long rants or get especially defensive when given a reflection. For them, this can feel like walking around with an emotional sunburn—even a slight touch may hurt.

Hypo-arousal is a less responsive, unusually distractible, or hard-to-engage state. In this state, your client may not be able to feel anything at all. It may seem like they're walking around with five sweaters layered over their emotions.

Although your intuition may help you assess your client's level of arousal, you can always just ask how they're feeling. To bypass their mind's analysis of an emotion, you might ask them for an emotional "barometer check."

Ask Questions in a metaphorical way:

- Sense your client's energy arousal level.
- Begin by inviting your client to pretend their different emotions are distinct weather patterns.
- Next, ask, "What's the weather inside you like right now?"
- Continue with another question: "How was the weather earlier today?"
- Then, you might ask them, "What's the forecast for the rest of the day? What about the rest of the week?"
- Reflect these emotions back to your client.

Lots of metaphors can work here. For example, you might ask your client to compare their emotional state to a song title, color, or animal. Get creative, and speak in a way that you know your client will connect with.

Expanding the Window of Tolerance

If you notice your client is in a state of constricted awareness, coach them back into their window of tolerance.

When your client is in a state of constricted awareness, they won't be capable of having creative insights or making forward progress in the session. To continue helping them make progress, it's essential to coach them back into their window of tolerance.

Help them use mindful awareness to ground themselves into the present and get a handle on their emotions. Try one of these simple techniques:

1. Invite them to take a few audible breaths with you, elongating the exhale.
2. Have them feel into the sensations of their feet, hips, and hands.
3. Guide them to listen more closely to the sounds around them.
4. Ask them to look at the space around them and, in a quiet whisper, name the objects they see.

Try different techniques with your client and notice how they respond.

Regardless of which technique you choose, reassure your client that what they're feeling is normal and welcome in the coaching space. Check in periodically throughout the session to see how their emotional arousal is changing.

Mindful Distraction Coaching

Processing emotions can be exhausting. Consider a client with a Pitta primary dosha type. They're trying to engage in emotional healing the same way they'd run their business. They're at risk of working too hard to emotionally heal.

Sometimes, encouraging your client to take a break and rest can help them recharge for continued work. Other times, mindful distraction allows enough space for an emotion to process itself.

One way to coach emotions using mindful distraction is to simply be present with your client. Allow your client—and yourself—to release any need to make tangible forward progress for the week. The importance of learning to ground might just be the most important conversation you and your client have.

If the session ends and your client is still in a dysregulated state, use powerful questions to help them access a centered, grounded state of awareness.

Ask questions to help your client consider how they might use mindful distraction.

- What would it look like to give yourself permission to take a few hours off today?
- What would you do if you had three hours to mindfully distract yourself from your emotions for the sake of recovery?
- What would you need to do to take this time for yourself?
- What might get in the way of you taking this time off?

There's a time and place for mindful distraction. Whether distractions are a hindrance or not depends on why and how they're used. For example, is watching TV your client's attempt to escape the real world, or is it simply relaxing—ultimately making the real world more manageable for them?

According to Jane McGonigal, who studies the channeling of positive attitudes and collaboration through alternate reality gaming, there are two modes in which people engage with distracting activities.

1. Self-suppression is the practice of using distractions to avoid pain.
2. Self-expansion is the practice of using distractions to promote positive experiences.

The same activity can be expansive or suppressive depending on why, when, and for how long your client does it. Rather than letting your client default into unconscious avoidance or having them push through fatigue or resistance, you might suggest that they unplug for the day, doing something restorative for a set period of time.

Of course, using mindful distraction can only help for so long. It's a short-term solution that may provide temporary relief, but eventually, the source of the painful emotion must be addressed. Then, your client can move closer to overall well-being.



Somatic Process Coaching

Somatic Process Coaching

Introduction to Somatic Processing

Somatic process coaching is the opposite of distracting your client from emotional difficulty.

Somatic process coaching is another way to coach around your client's Shadow energy and repressed emotion. Using this technique, you'll have your client lean into difficulty—fully feeling their emotions as they move through each one.

Coach somatic processing when your client is stuck in the middle of a strong emotional state.

This work is most appropriate when your client's emotional state is blocking them from seeing other perspectives and holding them back from acting.

Somatic process coaching is different from the perspective shifting exercise you learned in the Meaning Cornerstone.

Rather than trying to shift your client's attention to something more positive or eliminate the uncomfortable experience they're having, somatic process coaching has them own, embrace, and fully be with the unwanted feelings. By staying with the body in this way, your client is able to move the repressed emotions through their system—extracting wisdom and learning from whatever is there.

For example, if your client feels ashamed of something they've done, you might be tempted to push them toward something lighter, like finding the good in a bad situation or reflecting on their purpose. Sometimes, this perspective shift is the right process to employ—but it can also be a sneaky and selfish coaching move.

Your clients aren't the only ones who are conditioned to avoid discomfort, after all—there can be an unconscious motivation for you to get out of the uncomfortable Shadow place as quickly as possible. This coaching quick fix may be motivated by your desire to feel less empathic stress as their coach.

Remember, Shadow work is the path of spiritual warriors. If you're going to ask your clients to be with their difficult emotions, you must be ready to go there with them.

Consider this example: According to the theory behind somatic processing, if your client is disappointed because they blew it in a meeting, you should let them feel disappointed. By listening compassionately to the client's direct experience of disappointment and acknowledging their suffering, you can help them digest the difficult emotion—and let it pass on its own.

Listening to your client's difficult emotions may also offer crucial wisdom for their growth. This way of coaching honors a foundational perspective that sometimes life is hard, sometimes we mess up, and that's OK. When clients can accept life as it is—including the parts that are difficult to be with—they can experience greater resilience and become more whole.

The Somatic Process

Somatic process coaching allows your client to embody their experience, rather than intellectualizing it.

When you sense strong emotions, judgments, or resistance from your client, you can guide them through the somatic process to peel back the layers of emotion and ask progressively deeper and deeper questions. Here's an overview of the three-step somatic questioning process:

1. Explore and identify the Shadow emotion.
2. Embody the Shadow emotion.
3. Process the Shadow emotion.

We've provided example questions that you can use to guide your client through each of the steps. We encourage you to use these or ask powerful questions that intuitively come to you during a session. It's not necessary to ask all of the questions to get to the root of an emotion.

Step 1: Explore the emotion

Ask your client:

- Where is the place you don't want to go?
- What is the emotion that is here right now?
- What's that about?
- What is the resistance here?

Step 2: Embody the emotion

Ask your client:

- What is going on in your body right now? Explain the sensations of this emotion.
- Where exactly is it? Is it associated with a specific body part or chakra?
- What is the emotion's level of intensity, on a scale of 1 to 10?
- Does the sensation have a shape or a color?
- Does it move around or stay still?

Some clients will be more naturally embodied than others. If your client feels somewhat disconnected from their body, try cuing them toward a specific sensation. You might say, "Place your awareness in your chest. Does it feel warm? Pulsing? Vibrating? Heavy? Thick? Numb? Now, go to your gut. Does it feel queasy? Relaxed? Tight?"

This is often enough to get your client's senses flowing to where they can feel and report what's happening in their body.

Step 3: Process the emotion

Ask your client:

- If this sensation had a voice, what would it say to you?
- What message does this emotion have for you?
- What is the gift for you in all of this?
- What is one thing you hope to take from this experience?
- What will you do differently now that you've received this insight?

Compassion

There's more you'll want to know about coaching compassion. Last week, you learned the importance of coaching compassion during the Shadow work process.

Self-compassion is related to broader, more general compassion. Feelings of kindness and caring are a natural and healthy response to the presence of someone else's suffering. Feeling compassion for someone who's made a mistake means adopting an accepting, understanding attitude toward the person—as opposed to criticism and judgment.

Self-compassion turns this same attitude of compassion toward oneself. For many, this is a much more challenging endeavor than offering compassion to others.

The five actions of self-compassion include:

1. Being open to and aware of one's own suffering.
2. Offering kindness and understanding towards oneself.
3. Desiring the self's well-being.
4. Taking a nonjudgmental attitude toward one's inadequacies and failures.
5. Framing one's own experience in light of the common human experience.

Once your client has compassion for the Shadow that lives beneath their judgments of others, compassion for all beings will come more naturally and effortlessly to them.

Mindful awareness and self-compassion are intimately related.

In fact, mindful awareness and self-compassion rely on each other. You can't practice self-compassion if you're not aware of the need for it. Let's look at how these are related:

- Mindful awareness practice involves noticing the sensations of pain and being willing to stay with them, exploring them as they change. It also involves acting—and reacting—with intention and purpose.
- Self-compassion practice, meanwhile, involves noticing your reactions to being with the pain. It helps you choose to respond more effectively, do less harm, and be more supportive toward yourself—and, ultimately, toward others.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem has a Shadow side. Self-compassion and self-esteem seem similar at first, but they're two distinct qualities. Let's start with an overview of self-esteem.

Self-esteem: One's sense of worth, perceived value, or how much they like themselves.

Throughout your coaching career, you'll want to coach your clients toward owning their value and self-worth in a healthy way. But the pursuit of self-esteem can be tempting for the ego. And when one's self-esteem is out of balance, it has its own Shadow side.

Often, particularly in individualistic Western cultures, self-esteem is based on how successful and special someone seems compared to others. There's a predominant belief in many cultures that it's not OK to be average—that we should always be striving to be “better than.” Only then, it's implied, can we feel good about ourselves.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Ayurvedic practices are naturally based in compassion. The practices you learned in the Chopra Health and Chopra Meditation programs—such as meditation, healthy eating, quality sleep, and mindful movement—are rooted in self-compassion. These practices will help you teach clients how to love themselves in ways that don't require comparing themselves to others. By understanding their individual nature and strengths, they can develop self-care practices to nurture themselves. The emphasis is on knowing and caring for the mind, body, and spirit—not on keeping score and making comparisons.

Individualistic, comparison-based attempts to raise your client's self-esteem may push them toward perfectionistic, self-absorbed, or even narcissistic behaviors. Remember, the ego is fragile. When it's puffed up, it easily gets angry—even aggressive—toward those who might threaten the image it's built of itself.

The ego's need for high self-esteem may actually promote the suppression of Shadow emotions by encouraging your clients to ignore, distort, or hide personal shortcomings from themselves and others. This lack of vulnerability comes at the cost of seeing themselves clearly and accurately for who they are in their wholeness. Additionally, this type of self-esteem is often contingent on the latest success or failure. This means that it fluctuates depending on ever-changing circumstances, turning life into a never-ending emotional rollercoaster.

More on Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is a practice of unconditional love for oneself. In contrast to self-esteem, it isn't based on being especially special, successful, or set apart from others. It doesn't depend on one's ever-changing external conditions.

People feel compassion for themselves not because they possess some particular set of traits—like attractiveness, wealth, fame, intellect, talent, and so on—but because all human beings innately deserve compassion and understanding.

This means that with self-compassion, you don't have to feel better than others to feel good about yourself.

Acknowledge with kindness: Self-compassion allows for greater self-awareness because personal failings and difficult emotions can be acknowledged with kindness rather than suppressed along with the Shadow.

According to self-compassion researcher Kristin Neff, self-compassion—as compared to self-esteem—is associated with:

- Greater emotional resilience.
- More accurate self-concepts.
- More caring relationship behavior.
- Less narcissism.
- Less reactive anger.

Now that we know the difference between self-esteem and self-compassion, let's examine what it means to have empathy and compassion for others.

Empathy

Tune in to your client's energy. Empathy is at the core of the mirroring energy and style reflection that you learned about in Coaching Enrichment.

Empathy: Empathy means to viscerally feel what another feels. It's essential to keeping you energetically connected with your clients.

The ability to empathize relies on a special class of motor neurons called mirror neurons.

Thanks to what researchers have deemed mirror neurons, empathy can arise automatically when you witness someone experiencing pain or joy. For example, if you see someone slam a car door on their fingers, you might feel pain in your own hand. That feeling means your mirror neurons have kicked in.

Other empathy examples include:

- Getting hyped up watching your favorite athlete play in a high-stakes game.
- Feeling angry when someone else is being yelled at.
- Feeling your heart open during a romantic movie.

You don't have to depend on your mirror neurons, though. When you don't automatically feel what another person is feeling, you can rely on your imagination and intentionally put yourself in their shoes.

By this point in the Shadow cornerstone, you should have a deeper understanding of both empathy and compassion. It's clear that they've got a lot in common—but let's look at how they differ.

Empathy and compassion affect your overall well-being in different ways.

If you're sensitive to the difficult emotions your clients feel while doing Shadow work, you may experience a specific type of burnout at the end of the day. Caregivers and healthcare providers commonly describe this phenomenon as empathy fatigue.

Empathy fatigue: Empathy fatigue is often described as the emotional strain that an individual experiences who has been exposed to working with others who suffer from states of chronic illness, disability, trauma, grief, and loss.

Compassion, on the other hand, is a renewable resource. Rather than feeling your client's pain, you feel an unconditional kindness toward them—and a desire to support them in that pain.

When you're able to shift between empathy and compassion, you're much less likely to burn out. In fact, Neff's research even indicates that compassion and empathy employ different regions of the brain—and that compassion can combat empathetic distress.

Self-care is an essential skill to protect you from empathy fatigue.

If you feel like you're getting caught up in your client's emotions, practice what you'd preach. Here are some ways you can protect yourself from experiencing empathy fatigue during a coaching session:

- Ground yourself. Take a few breaths. Feel your feet on the floor and your hips on your chair. Then bring your attention into your heart. Breathe deeply in and out, willing your heart to open and embrace your client in their challenge.
- Repeat your own purpose statement in your mind. Call on your archetype's wisdom and compassion to help you support your client.
- Try the Tibetan Buddhist practice of Tonglen. Imagine that your heart is a purifying carbon filter for Shadow energy. Breathe in your client's dark, smoky energy. Alchemize that energy within your heart, and breathe out pure compassion.
- Repeat your self-compassion statement, silently or out loud. You might also use a more traditional loving kindness meditation phrase—or any phrase that feels appropriate to the situation.



Shadow Home Practice

Shadow Home Practices

Introduce home practices that align with your client's natural skills and abilities. If one practice doesn't resonate with a client, try another. These home practices will work for all dosha types.

Home Practice 1: Release judgment

What it's for: Checking in on and releasing judgments

Instructions for your client: Throughout the day, become aware of any judgment you make—no matter how big or small. Ask yourself, "Who am I judging, and why?"

Then ask, "Is the judgment true or false?" If the judgment is false, look inward and do your best to release it. If the judgment is true, let it open you to a new perspective and point you toward compassion—for yourself and others.

Home Practice 2: S.T.O.P. and proceed

What it's for: Increasing awareness of emotions and stopping negative emotions from escalating

Instructions for your client: Throughout the day, notice any emotional trigger and use the S.T.O.P. method to move past it.

S: Stop.

T: Take a few breaths.

O: Observe your emotions.

P: Proceed.

Feel the emotion, rather than repressing it. Recognize it as a valuable piece of information—one that can give you direction to choose the next right action. You can also frame this practice as an experiment to see if you can still care for yourself and honor your personal commitments in the midst of an emotional trigger.

Home Practice 3: The R.A.I.N. technique

What it's for: Bringing awareness during stressful moments

Instructions for your client: In a difficult situation, instead of reacting automatically, do this: Pause, breathe, and become aware of your feelings. The acronym R.A.I.N. will help you respond in a calm, deliberate way.

R: Recognize you're in a moment of stress.

A: Allow however you're feeling to just be—without judgment.

I: Investigate your experience and notice any stories you're telling yourself.

N: Nurture your mind and body in the moment.

Home Practice 4: minutes of slow, deep breathing daily

What it's for: Builds resiliency in the nervous system to help manage emotions more effectively

Instructions for your client: Do 5 minutes of coherent breathing (or another pranayama practice) in the morning to start the day from a centered space. Do another 5 minutes at the end of the day to calm the nervous system.

Home Practice 5: Journal

What it's for: Bringing self-awareness to an emotional state

Instructions for your client: At the end of the day, visualize your day and any strong emotions you felt throughout the day. Write down where you felt the emotion, and give it a name. This will help them practice the coaching that you've done around releasing emotions.

Home Practice 6: Meditate

What it's for: Cultivating intuition and new perspectives

Instructions for your client: Depending on the client, instruct them on either So Hum meditation or offer Primordial Sound Meditation instruction.

Remember to co-create home practices with your client.

During the coaching conversation, you'll uncover opportunities to personalize home practices. Your client may also share solutions and ideas that they've tried throughout the week. Check in with them about their progress throughout the week, and build on the home practices that are working for them.