

“Coaching Thru Self-Deception that Blinds Our Clients” – 6/08/18

“Box Thinking” – Summary & GPSI Coaching Guide

Based on a Presentation by Lerae Gydic

Based on Leadership & Self Deception and The Anatomy of Peace By the Arbing Institute

What is “Box Thinking?”

- “Box Thinking” is a habit of thinking that our clients acquired long ago. It is usually a protective mechanism that is triggered when a person experiences uncomfortable or painful emotions. It worked for them when they first used it (often when they were young), but it is not serving them well now.
- “Box Thinking” is extreme thinking. The mind extrapolates from one or a few negative situations to seeing the whole world in a negative way. This somehow feels safer or protective to the person. It is at the very least, slipping into a familiar pattern. People often have more than one Box.
- Most people are Out of “The Box” 90-95% of the time, maybe more. I have personally encountered clients who are in “The Box” most of the time. NOTE: This might be a signal to refer the client to therapy.

My Personal Story

- My own personal “Box Thinking” patterns helped me in childhood. But my Coach helped me see that my “Box Thinking” wasn't serving me anymore and was making my life more difficult. It took me months to apply this model to my own life. My mind kept fighting it, because, when I was uncomfortable or threatened, being in “The Box” felt safer.
- Through this work, I saw how my feelings and attitudes about the past were being sensed by one of my parents and triggering them into negative feelings (guilt) and behaviors in the present. We now have a closer, less complicated relationship. Being able to report my success to my clients is helpful in supporting them through this process.
- Through my own application of the tool, I became more skilled at supporting my clients with the struggle of changing their thought patterns. I recommend a Coach do “The Box” Thinking exercises with another Coach before using it with their clients.

The “Box Thinking” Coaching Process

- Once a client knows about their “Box Thinking”, they can choose to either continue to see things from the **Inside** “The Box” or choose to see things from **Outside** “The Box”. Awareness of “The Box” and getting out of “The Box”, gives the person freedom:
 - “I **choose what relationship I will have with the person** or situation.”
 - I choose **how I will be** in relation to this person.
 - The combination of both our choices creates our relationship.
 - They choose how they are in relation with me.
 - There is a better chance they will choose to be positive (or collaborative) with me if I choose to be positive with them.
- I have found that it is helpful for the client to name “The Box”: (e.g., Darkness, Fearful Place, Bad World) and the “Out-of-The-Box” state too, so it becomes more concrete (e.g., Peaceful, Open, Green Pastures, Normal).
- When they are in “The Box”, clients are reminded of a past negative experience, and having a strong negative emotion. “The Box” colors and clouds their thinking, so that they are less effective in communicating with others and less effective at choosing how they will interact with others.
- This also adversely impacts their ability to perceive others’ intentions’ and negatively colors their perception of others’ behaviors and messages.
- The “Boxes I Carry” Tool allows clients to see “The Box(es)” that they carry.
- The questions after the diagram help the client see how “The Box” impacts their perceptions and behaviors.

- The “Out of the Box” diagram helps the client compare how they feel, think, communicate, and behave when they are Inside “The Box” and Outside “The Box”. It also helps the client see that they’re in “The Box” view is not the **whole truth**.
- I feel it works best when the Coach works with the client to fill out the diagrams and asks the questions during the Coaching session.

