

Instructions

How to look at a Coaching Card

Suitable for working with self, another individual, or a group

Background

One might look at the cards as one browses through a newspaper, or one might choose to really scrutinize them.

Great importance lies in how we look at the cards, and herein we'll propose some emphases and guidance on how we recommend looking at the cards.

Every card in The Coaching Game deck presents a topic via a word naming the topic, and a picture that offers another point of view on the topic. Because each card bears both a word and a picture, our tendency is to read the word, and thereby assign a meaning to the picture; or alternatively, to focus on the picture and ignore the word.

Both ways of depicting the topic — visual and textual — reflect the perceptions of the two respective parts of the brain: the right brain, stimulated by the intuition and emotion depicted in the picture; and the left brain, responsible for analytical thinking, represented by the word.

Simultaneous stimulation by the picture and the word together creates a unique situation wherein a struggle takes place between emotion and logic, setting off a sort of “short circuit” in the vigilant defense mechanism of our consciousness. With appropriate work, this “scrambling” actually liberates us from our “controlling parent lists” of “how we should look at life”, and enables other points of view to seep through to our consciousness.

Objective

In this process, we attempt to neutralize — beyond the actual period of working with the cards — our automatic tendency to attach significance to things using our understood perceptions via which we see the world.

Neutralizing “automation” enables us to suddenly realize another point of view, as if it previously hadn't existed on our radar.

Process

Spread out the entire deck in front of you, either face up or face down, and choose one card.

Because of our tendency to automatically read the word, which, while it occupies only a tiny portion of the card, within seconds dominates as we immediately open the “right drawers” of understanding the card (on some occasions without even bothering to look at the picture), **cover up the word with your finger.**

The Coaching Game

Now look at the picture as if you were taking in a work of art. Scrutinize it down to its smallest details, up, down, and sideways, from every direction and angle, not focusing solely on the central element. As you look for the little elements that speak to, you expand the card's point of view. While examining the picture, ask yourself in a relaxed fashion the following questions:

- o What's going on outside the frame of the picture? What's its continuation?
- o What's behind it, beneath it, in front of it?
- o What story does it tell me?
- o Where is it taking place? What is the setting?
- o Why did I choose this particular card, and why today?

Now uncover the word. Read it and "play with" it. The word too contains treasures and associations, for example:

"Important" might be broken down into "imp" + "port" + "ant". Find associative words and contexts that arise from the word that names the topic. What's the root of the word? What other words can be formed from this root?

Do I perceive this to be a "good word" or a "bad word"? Try to "turn around" your judgment of this word.

Now look at the entirety of the picture and the word together, and ask yourself:

- o Do the meanings of the picture link up with the meanings of the word for me?
- o If so, in what ways? If not, what do I feel when I don't understand the context?
- o What does this card say about me?
- o How is it related to my life?
- o What's more significant to me: the word, the picture, or the combination of the two?

We recommend that you keep going: Ask every question that enters your mind. The more questions you ask, the more you expand your point of view of the card. Sometimes only on the fifth or sixth viewing does the meaning of a card dawn on the viewer, so take your time.

While this process is designed specifically for self-work, we highly recommend it for work with another individual as well as for group work. In the latter, at the end of the process, you can ask participants to share thoughts and feelings that arose while looking at the card and float queries for further contemplation.