

## The Person-Centred Approach to Coaching

### Ten questions to guide behavior in a helping relationship:

**1. Can I be perceived as trustworthy and dependable?**

Being trustworthy does not demand that I be rigidly consistent. It is better to admit when I am, for example, annoyed. Rather than being acceptant all the time, I should be real and genuine.

**2. Can I communicate unambiguously?**

Can I indicate my understanding and acceptance to the client by listening and focusing on the meaning of his message and rephrasing it in clear terms?

**3. Can I let myself experience positive attitudes towards this person?**

It is not always easy to experience positive attitudes towards the client. I may feel vulnerable and be concerned that my kindness may be abused. Maintaining a formal, professional relationship is not required. It is an achievement when we can learn that it is safe to relate to a client as a person for whom we have positive feelings.

**4. Can I be strong enough as a person to be separate from the client?**

Can I own and express my own feelings as something separate from the client's. When I can feel the strength of being a separate person, then I find that I can let myself go much more deeply in understanding and accepting him, because I am not afraid of losing myself. Then I will not be discouraged by the client's fear, anger, etc.

**5. Am I secure enough to permit him his separateness?**

Can I allow the client to be what he is? Can I give him the freedom to be honest or deceitful, childish or mature, etc? Or do I expect him to follow my advice and follow my example?

**6. Can I step into his world so completely that I lose the need to judge him?**

Can I enter the client's world so sensitively that I might move about in it freely, without treading on meanings that are precious to him?

**7. Can I accept all facets of the person?**

Am I only able to accept the client conditionally? Do I only accept some aspects of him and disapprove of others?

**8. Can I act with sufficient sensitivity so that my behaviour will not be perceived as a threat?**

If I can free the client from external threat, then he can begin to deal with the internal feelings and conflicts which he finds threatening within himself.

**9. Can I free him from the threat of external evaluation?**

Right through our lives, in our homes, schools and organisations we are being judged by others. These judgments may have social value, but they do not encourage personal growth. Can I keep this relationship with the client free of evaluation?

**10. Can I meet him as a person who is in the process of becoming, or will I be bound by his past and my past?**

If my view of the client puts him into some category, then I am limiting him. If I accept him as a "process of becoming", then I am contributing to his growth.