



Being with “I don’t know”

Being with “I don’t know” – the importance for the client and for the coach

The “I don’t know” of the client:

I know many clients answer our coaching questions with “I don’t know.” And a typical response may be “Well, if you did know, what would that be?” Without helping the client to delve into their deep inner knowing however, that question is not easily

answered. They believe that they don’t know the answer, that they really don’t have a clue. That perspective keeps them stuck in the myriad of options with no clarity for themselves. Something is keeping them stuck due to things like resistance and limiting beliefs that are not in their current awareness.

In body-centered coaching, I have clients check in with their body wisdom, listening to the still quiet voice within themselves, being silent and calm in the not knowing – being curious about what will be delivered up from the body. Given the space and time to be more present with themselves, clients can listen and learn from their inner teacher in a way that does not happen with “talk coaching” which often only includes the mind in the conversation.

For insight to be deep and meaningful, the whole person needs to be included in the coaching conversation – body, mind and spirit. When body and spirit are included in the conversation, as well as the mind, there is a greater depth of learning and wisdom that comes through the client – a wisdom that has been there all along, though kept hidden from the client. The mind suggests to them that they do not know – when in fact they actually do know.

For a client to check in with their inner knowing, facilitated by a body-centered coach, clients can become more empowered with the part of them that actually does know. As clients begin to trust their inner knowing, they can make choices that are more congruent and sustainable. They can be with what is true for them.

The “I don’t know” of the coach:

Paradoxically, it is important for the coach to come from a place of “I don’t know.”

Being with an attitude of “I don’t know” is an important aspect of the beingness of a coach. With the attitude of not knowing the client’s answer, not knowing what is a good solution for their dilemma, not knowing what their next steps should be, really opens up the realm of possibility – not only for the client but for the coach. If at any time we KNOW what is best for the client, we are doing them a disservice – it’s moving away from the idea that the client has their own answers.

Having a practice of “I don’t know” serves the coach with a freedom – a freedom not to know, not to have an answer, not to have a solution. It allows the coach to ask open honest body-centered questions to which the coach has no idea what the answer will be. It allows for more curiosity and a sense of wonder.

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