

Lesson 31

Homework

One of the ways to anchor the coaching experience for the client and make its effects real in his life is give him an assignment or exercise to be done following the session. Some clients like and want “homework.” Some clients don’t. Some coaches like to give homework. Others don’t. Tune in to whether or not homework might be appropriate for a particular client at a particular time.

The word “homework” often has negative connotations because it reminds us of an experience in school that was more of a painful obligation than fun. For that reason, if you assign “homework” you might want to rename it “homeplay” or “a fun assignment” or “a chance to master what we’ve been talking about.”

Whatever you call it, homework is an opportunity for the client to take a step toward a chosen goal by putting into action a principle you have discussed in coaching. It can be a simple one-time act, such as “phone your dad this week” or a more pervasive introspective study, such as “notice whenever you start to criticize yourself.”

Homework assignments usually arise spontaneously during the course of a coaching session. Based upon what a client is sharing, you may get an intuition that a particular act upon returning home will bring to life a theme you have been exploring, or help the client build a muscle in an area calling for attention. If you get a flash of insight that a particular piece of homework would be useful, go with it.

Here are some examples of homework assignments you might suggest:

Phone the agent you’ve heard about and make an appointment to see her

Surf the Internet to peruse the Bali vacation you’ve been fantasizing about

Make a date with your husband and find a babysitter

Each morning write for five minutes on your book, and see if those five minutes lead to more

For one week just let your husband be exactly as he is, who he is, and make no attempt to fix or change him

Notice that all of these “assignments” are generally fun and positive-goal oriented. Assignments that smack of discipline the client has already failed at, such as “don’t take a second dessert” will usually not work any better than the client’s past failed efforts. Move the client in the direction of relief, peace, and manifestation of what he wants rather than more fighting with self.

Brian Johnson of the [En*Theos Academy](#) uses the term “blissipline,” which I really like. It assumes that we create more successful results when we act in alignment with our bliss rather than by forcing or fighting with ourselves.

When offering homework, always make it a suggestion rather than a demand or a requirement. Clients have had enough demands and requirements, and coaching should be a relief from pressure, not more of it. Always ask the client before suggesting homework. “May I suggest a fun practice that might help you make some progress with your son?”

Most clients are open to receive homework assignments. Whether or how much they follow through is up to them. You can help your client follow up by asking him in your next session (if you have one), “How did your talk with your dad go?” One function of a coach is to keep your client on track with her goals and intentions. Just be sure to do so gently and supportively rather than sounding like a punitive teacher.

Homework can be very helpful when it’s a joyful co-creation. When the client follows through, important movement occurs. Use it where and how you can.

Exercise:

Formulate three homework suggestions that might be helpful to clients you are currently seeing or have seen:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Affirm:

**I follow my intuition to offer creative suggestions
to help my clients put their visions into action.
I am rewarded to watch my clients take positive, self-affirming steps
to reach their goals.**