






Using Themes to Shift Perspectives




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As a coach you may hear common themes that expose underlying beliefs and values which contribute to the coachees' perception of reality. Listening for key statements and phrases will help you recognize these themes.

Once identified, the themes direct the coach to recognize where they need to focus and to highlight strategies to support the coachee to explore reactions and realities that contribute to a shift in their perspective. This opens a window for exploration of new opportunities and solutions.




 Valuable Insight >	 Personal Empowerment >	 Creating Connections >	 Eliminating Obstacles >
Ambivalence	Authenticity	Abandonment	Ignoring intuition
Attached to the outcome	Hardware store for milk	Alienation	Not in the present
Carrying old messages	Permission	Authority/victim	Perfection & control
Either/or	Taking it personally	Boundaries	Stuck in a strategy
Wherever you go, there you are	Unmet needs	Caretaking/people pleasing	Tunnel vision
	Wanting things to be different from what is	Lone wolf	

 **Valuable Insights** – address these themes to support the coachee to become more self-aware, allowing them to move forward

 Theme you observe:	 Listen to clarify the challenge within context:	 Strategy to promote valuable insight:
Ambivalence	<p>Notice if someone is unable or unwilling to make a choice</p> <p>Cannot make up their mind or make a decision, constant state of confusion & uncertainty</p>	<p>Consider questions that help coachee see potential consequences of procrastinating</p>
Attached to outcome & expectations	<p>When someone wants, hopes & believes that their intended, specific outcome will be achieved & when plans fail or get altered by circumstances, they feel disappointed & disillusioned</p>	<p>Ask “what is true right now?” “What is it costing you to keep hoping for [expectation] when it may or may not happen?”</p>
Carrying old messages	<p>Buying into childhood messages</p>	<p>Ask “what is true about that message now?” “What do you get out of holding onto that message?”</p>
Either/or	<p>Listen for how one option prevents another option such as I could do X but then I cannot do Y.</p> <p>(Black & White thinking)-do not believe there are alternatives</p>	<p>Ask questions to open their thinking & help find additional options</p>
Wherever you go, there you are	<p>Beliefs related to how the grass is greener elsewhere</p> <p>Thinking can fix their problems by focusing outward</p>	<p>Point out that no matter what change they believe will fix their problem they are still the common denominator</p>






Personal Empowerment – address these themes to support empowering the coachee to feel liberated and unburdened

 Theme you observe:	 Listen to clarify challenge within context:	 Strategy to promote personal empowerment:
Authenticity	Knowing who they really are & what they really want	“It seems as though this isn’t what you really want. What is true about that?” Or “what would you do differently if you lived every day without fear of the outcome?” Or “what would life be like if you stepped outside of your comfort zone?”
Going to the hardware store for milk	Looking for help in the wrong place	Point out that they are seeking support from the wrong person & help them see there may be other people or resources that can give them what they want
Permission	Focus on giving self permission rather than asking others	Focus on getting coachee to give themselves permission, allowing them to discuss their impending decision, & asking “what it is I would really love to do if there were no consequences?”
Taking it personally	Acting as if something is only happening to them & not to anyone else Whatever happens, good or bad, they believe that what is going on is all about them	Point out the other person may have explicit needs that we might not be aware of
Unmet needs	When needs are not met, they can unconsciously behave in ways that are not healthy	Notice your coachees behavior & asking yourself- “exactly what is it they really need?” Identify need, the coachee can express it, discuss it, & learn how to ask for it
Wanting things to be different from what is	Causes suffering	Point out circumstances are what they are, your coachee can choose to make a change or accept them






Creating Connections – address these themes to highlight how coachee behaviour sabotages meaningful connections

 Theme you observe:	 Listen to clarify challenge within context:	 Strategy to create community / connections:
Abandonment	Dreading loss (something or someone); fear of leaving/left behind	Help coachee recognize that letting go of pain almost always outweighs the perceived loss. Help imagine unexpected possibilities
Alienation	Isolation & separation- feeling of being different & separate from others	Help recognition of how miserable they are because they feel they do not belong & are rejecting themselves before giving a chance for connection
Victim/Authority	Victim: Listen for client saying “things are beyond their control and nothing they can do” Authority: “I know best” accompanied by some version of blame. <i>In either position the coachee acts as if there is no choice</i>	Help them to master the middle ground. Look at each situation & choose accordingly rather than submit to or reject rules automatically. Separate how something is requested from what was requested.
Boundaries	Sense of feeling violated or disrespected. A means to protect themselves from emotional or physical harm. To set a boundary is to inform but must have consequence if violated & then follow through	Ask for their definition of boundary. Might see “boundaries are what’s ok and what’s not ok for other people to do in your presence.” “What does that mean to you?” Ask to “think of time when they were resentful/uncomfortable?” Developing, articulating & enforcing boundaries is a long-term process which takes practice
Care taking & people pleasing	May sublimely expect something in return for helping others & when not given feel resentful. Putting everyone else’s needs above their own & not taking time to examine their needs or what is best for them	Help form healthy boundaries, take care of themselves without guilt, appreciate others without losing themselves in the process & stand up & share when behavior is unacceptable to you. “What are you sacrificing to keep this relationship going?” “What is it that has you solving other people’s problems instead of your own?” “What stops you from saying no when asked to something you don’t want to do?”
Lone wolf	See asking for help as weakness & see judgement or vulnerability in asking	Help coachee recognize asking for help is a sign of strength



Eliminating Obstacles – address these themes to identify obstacles that keep the coachee from moving forward

 Theme you observe:	 Listen to clarify challenge within context:	 Strategy to promote eliminate obstacles:
<p>Ignoring intuition</p>	<p>Refusing to believe what we already know deep down</p>	<p>Help coachee become more aware of intuition & make conscious decisions. “It seems as though you know what you really want, what might be stopping you from making the decision?”</p>
<p>Not in the present</p>	<p>Focused on past regret or future thought</p>	<p>Ask “what is true now?” To highlight that in the present their thoughts are the only thing propelling their fear or regret</p>
<p>Perfection & control</p>	<p>Notice absolute language- always, never, impossible, no other choice</p> <p>Need or desire for control</p>	<p>Help differentiate when it’s their business or concern and when it’s not & to realize letting go frees up time & energy. “What if there is no perfect, what would that mean?”</p>
<p>Stuck in a strategy</p>		
<p>Tunnel vision</p>	<p>Wrapped up in their own experiences, beliefs & ideas and believe others have the same ones. Often dismissive if they do not.</p>	<p>Help coachee learn to stand in someone else’s shoes</p>