

**Selecting a coach.**

Most advice on selecting a coach focuses on analysis of the coach and their capacities, qualifications or values. It seldom explores the underlying relationship in much detail, nor the deeper elements that are necessary conditions for learning. I thought it could be useful to draw up a list of things to look for in a coach who is capable of promoting deep, sustainable change in others. The following questions are inspired by Carl Rogers' core conditions for personal growth.

**1) Are you feeling some degree of anxiety or vulnerability around the coach?** Are the issues that you want to resolve apparent to you when you're around them? If you aren't feeling slightly anxious or vulnerable, then you're unlikely to be stretched by working with them. The motivation to change comes from you, so if you're not experiencing the issues that you want to work on while you're with the coach, they're unlikely to be able to help you to change.

**2) Is the coach congruent?** That is, does what they're saying match how they appear to be experiencing in that moment? Do they seem comfortable in their own skin, being their unique self? Are they real? Do you trust that this person means exactly what they say, and that their deepest feelings really match what they say? Is there evidence that they accept how they're feeling in the moment?

**3) Is the coach showing that they hold your humanness in high regard?** That is, do they value you as a person, not just as a client, and believe in your capacity to change what you want to change? Do you feel that they care for you as a person? Do you feel accepted by them? Do they encourage you to search for your own meanings and experiencing? Do you feel safe, even though you are being challenged?

**4) Do you feel like you are 'connecting' with the coach?** Do you sense that they can see your inner world? Psychological contact is necessary for the coach to see your inner workings. Without this contact, sustained growth isn't possible.

**5) Is the coach accurately and empathically understanding your inner world?** Are they capable of sensing your world as if it were their own, yet keeping it separate from their own experience, talking about the difference?

**6) Do you experience some of the congruence, acceptance and empathy of the coach?** The primary way that humans learn is by experience, so you need to experience these aspects of the coach.