

## Meaning Centred Coaching

### Introduction

The Meaning Centred Coaching Model (MCCM) was developed and implemented by Anthony Eldridge-Rogers between 2007 and 2014 during his pioneering work coaching people seeking to initiate and develop recovery from substance and behaviour misuse and addiction.

The MCC model forms the core of a coaching approach to implementing effective coaching methods to assist people to recover and get well from a variety of behavioural healthcare challenges.

Although the first area of focus for the model was in the field of addiction recovery it was revised in 2010 to be *substance and behaviour misuse and addiction*.

In 2012 it was recognised that the benefit to individuals from interaction with coaches using the MCC approach could be applied to a variety of behavioural driven health conditions such as Diabetes, Obesity, Mental Health, Cancer, and issues facing Veterans with PTSD where the primary driver for recovery is dependent on effective, lasting and stable behaviour change by the individuals affected.

In 2013 the position of the MCC model was revised again to encompass all aspects of human change activities and processes and it is proposed that the MCC model is applicable for use with anyone wishing to engage in personal change and develop human fulfilment (across any human situation or context).

In support of this, the MCC model outline below is universal in so far as it makes no reference to any specific human context, role or function ( i.e health recovery, leadership, relationships etc.).

Where the MCC model is being used within a specific context, then the 4 Principles are brought into alignment with the context (i.e. Leadership Coaching, Executive Coaching, Relationship Coaching, Recovery and Wellness Coaching, Health Coaching, Life Coaching, Mindfulness Coaching and so forth)

The premise of the MCC model is that humans can be activated to change, can develop resilience, can generate and activate energy to overcoming self defined and perceived obstacles and integrate and transform suffering if they can uncover, experience and integrate a personal meaning and /or ongoing series of 'meanings' into their lives.

The MCC model is positioned as a coaching approach and applied practice that has, as its primary purpose, the generation and maintenance of a positive, functional, empowering, transformational relationship *environment* between the coach and the person (or group) they are coaching,

This environment places the person being coached (the client(s)) search for, development of and fulfilment of their meaning (or meanings) of their life (across variable time ranges from the present moment outwards) at its centre. This meaning is revealed within the coaching relationship through the specific scrutiny of and experience of the present moment, the imagined and anticipated future and the experienced past.

Revealed and emerging meaning is then explored, developed and actualised through the fields of Movement, Knowing and Integration.

The MCC model contains 4 areas or fields of focus, 4 Principles, 4 Foundational Tasks for Coaches and a set of skills.

#### **4 Fields (Field definition: A complex of forces that serve as causative agents in human behaviour)**

- 1. Meaning**
- 2. Movement**
- 3. Knowing**
- 4. Integration**

#### **4 Principles**

- 1. Meaning, movement, knowledge and integration always comes from the client**
- 2. MCC coaching process increases a person's self-knowledge and ability to make choices**
- 3. Meaning develops through relationship with Self, others, systems and communities**
- 4. People are complete in the present moment yet continually changing**

#### **4 Foundational Tasks / Skills**

- 1. Collaboration**

*Design\** (What gets designed (i.e. confidentiality))

*Listening\**

*Powerful Questions\**

*Curiosity\**

*Action\**

*Accountability\**

*Efficacy (the power to produce a desired result or effect)*

*Environment*

## **2. Self-Management**

*Non Directive*

*Non Coercive*

*Priming*

*Language Use\**

*Transparency (within the context of self-management) \**

*Ethics*

*Coaches inner responses*

*Triggering*

*Compassion (sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it)*

## **3. Transparency**

*Humanness*

*Peerness*

*Courage*

## **4. Ethics**

*Responsibility*

*Best practice*

*Supervision*

\* Denotes specific skill within overall task

## **4 Fields**

### **1. Meaning**

In this stage individual meaning is sought through the specifics of the current experience as well as sought through envisioning of future potential states of the individual.

Values are revealed and explored and placed within both an internal and external environmental field. From this experience emerges purpose on a continuum of scale of time from the specific now to the envisioned 'then' with meaning or meanings revealed.

### **2. Movement (Action and Accountability)**

From a chosen purpose attached to meaning a specific movement or series of movements (action or actions) are determined between the coach and the client.

Accountability is explored and established to create the energy for movement either towards or away from the action.

The action or actions decided on may or may not be performed, may be performed in an adapted or augmented way or may lead to action not directly perceived during the initial action formation session.

Identification of obstacles are neither sought nor rejected if they appear during this stage but when and if they appear in the resistant form (as obstacles) then this is integrated into the development of action. Obstacles as perceived by the client are to be scrutinised within the context of meaning.

### **3. Knowing**

In this stage focus is put on what the person is becoming, and had become, aware of. What is becoming 'Known'. What is appearing as conscious self-knowledge about self, feelings, body, relationships and how choices are made and experienced.

Knowing includes language, cognitive, the emotional, intuitive, rational and irrational, physical.

In this stage so called 'obstacles', revealed or identified both physical, resource based, cognitive, emotional and belief formed, are identified and positioned within the environment of the knowing field.

### **4. Integration**

In this stage choices are made from cognitive, emotional, intuitive and 'unknown' fields as to what will be specifically integrated (adopted) or rejected (un-adopted). Rejection does not mean removal but replacement, recoding or repositioning. Obstacles are examined and repositioned to provide resistance as movement through, past or around takes place. This process allows for the reframing or coding of obstacles to become other types of describable units. i.e. allies, assets and so on.

### **First Engagement sessions**

The first engagement conversations are intended to be part of the overall design process of the coach - client relationship.

The action and accountability stage is suspended from the sequence until such a time as the coach and client have made a decision and commitment to work together.

Once this commitment has been made then the client can engage with action and accountability within the conversation whole. Coaches ought to integrate knowledge and awareness of the use and intended integration of action and accountability with the client before it is actually used.

### **MCC and Goals**

While the MCC model includes the idea of identifying, creating and achieving goals, these goals are seen as one of the ways that movement towards and into meaning is created.

The MCC model defines goals as tasks or the act of doing. i.e. the acting upon the world of the client that generates movement towards meaning. A goal can be meaning neutral or be meaning containing i.e. the end state in itself (intrinsic) or meaning facilitating.

A meaning neutral goal may be a task that in and of itself that has no meaning content in its actual doing except that the goal is attached to meaning. For example, caring for a loved one who is ill e.g. washing their bed clothes. The washing of the clothes may be hard, uncomfortable and / or tiring in itself when viewed as a task only. When connected to the context of who is being cared for and looked after, that is, when connected to the meaning, the task becomes transformed by that meaning.

Goals that are intrinsic have meaning within the act of their doing. The task, for the person undertaking it contains the meaning within it. Creative acts are usually meaning related tasks such as painting, sculpture, music and so on. These two types of goals may be compounded together. For example, an artist who finds meaning in the act of painting a picture also paints a picture for a loved one or audience.

As meaning has no end point, there cannot ever be an end to meaning or enough meaning. Meaning itself is not as such a goal which is usually necessarily formulated as time bound. Satisfaction in arriving at a goal is not to be confused with meaning. Meaning is generated or brought into a more focused field of experience through interaction with a goal or goals rather than a specific achievement or non-achievement of a goal or goals.

Satisfaction arises and then diminishes. Meaning does not have a range but rather is present in awareness or is not. Different meanings may well evoke different emotions or combinations of emotion at differing levels of intensity and thus, from an emotional perspective, may be placed in an order of significance by a person.

While many coaching models (e.g. GROW) place almost all the emphasis on the Goal - Object axis, the MCC model places this inside a larger frame or context that is defined as meaning and which the MCC model proposes is the primary experiential and known experience of a person that can be placed as the beacon for all subsequent actions.

### **MCC and Obstacles**

Identifying obstacles in relation to goals is not a primary activity but is seen as a secondary outcome of the way humans typically solve movement (action) problems when they consider closing the gap between the present and future using a goal or goals. Obstacles appear and are viewed as neutral.

The commitment, effort and intentionality to overcome perceived obstacles (resistance) is considered in the MCC model to be a function of a person's ongoing connection to meaning.

### **MCC and Values**

While values are usually considered to be core or noncore. i.e core values being those held highest within a person (and which will usually be held on to last) values are also secondary to meaning. A specific value, no matter how core, may be given up in service of or connection to meaning.

For example, a person having a core value of honesty may well act deceitfully or lie if meaning is most closely served by the value being relinquished. Experiencing and aligning with values, whilst an integrated part of human fulfilment is nevertheless always influenced by meaning.

### **MCC and Polarity**

The MCC model offers a balanced polarity approach to the question "What do I want" by placing equal emphasis on the question "What does life want from me". In this way the model creates a three-dimensional field that allows limitless exploration of the polarity. Clients get to be both the questioner and the questioned.

### **MCC Windows**

The MCC approach can also integrate with 'windows' through which meaning can be revealed and approached.

**They are, in no particular order of efficacy**

Narrative, Story

Archetypes

Systems theory

Meditative, Emptiness, Presence

The Unknown

The Body

Neuroscience