

# Creating Emotional Safety in Coaching

## Quick recap

The meeting focused on emotional safety and coaching techniques, with discussions on creating psychological safety, tracking emotional states, and understanding cultural differences in communication. Participants explored strategies for managing energy and connecting with individuals, including techniques for scanning emotions and building trust. The conversation concluded with insights on handling relationship conflicts, financial discussions, and the importance of making specific requests in both personal and professional contexts.

## Summary

### Emotional Safety in Coaching

Annie discussed the importance of creating emotional safety in coaching, explaining that people often get stuck because they don't feel safe enough to take action towards their goals. She emphasized the need to track the state rather than just the content of what someone is saying, as people often hide their true feelings behind narratives. Annie shared an example of her husband trying to convince an art historian to use ChatGPT, illustrating how focusing on content alone can miss the underlying emotional reactions. She encouraged the group to prioritize tracking the state, as working with emotions can lead to more transformative results in coaching.

### Effective Coaching and Cultural Sensitivity

The group discussed coaching techniques, focusing on the importance of meeting clients where they are emotionally and culturally. Annie emphasized the need to validate clients' experiences and build psychological safety before leading them towards change. Stuart added insights on cross-cultural communication, highlighting the importance of respecting and understanding cultural differences in communication styles. The discussion also touched on the concept of "resistance" in coaching, with Annie suggesting that it is often a result of the coach's lack of skill rather than the client's opposition.

### Energetic Scanning and Connection Strategies

Amala and Annie discussed strategies for tracking energy and connecting with individuals and groups. Annie shared her approach of scanning for the most disconnected person in a group and sending them love and attention, which helps create safety and engagement. She also described her method of scanning for incongruence or fear in individuals during conversations and sending them love energetically. Amala realized she had been using similar intuitive techniques in her teaching and coaching, giving her confidence in her abilities. They also discussed the concept of energetic scanning and its connection to gestalt awareness.

## **Embracing and Honoring Your Feelings**

Annie discussed the importance of validating and honoring one's feelings, emphasizing that society often trains individuals to justify their emotions, which can lead to a lack of self-trust and difficulty in asserting oneself. She used metaphors like Rocky's training and the concept of "last reps" to illustrate the need for resilience and self-regulation when facing opposition. Annie encouraged Eesha to practice standing firm in her desires, even when others resist, by focusing on the potential positive impact of her choices on herself and others.

## **Emotional Safety in Professional Communication**

Annie and Eesha discussed the importance of emotional safety and validation in communication, particularly in professional settings. Annie shared her approach to helping individuals recognize and address their unconscious shame and defensive behaviors, emphasizing the need to create a safe space for emotional expression. They explored how to handle situations where someone's feelings or communication style are perceived as problematic, with Annie suggesting a gentle, pacing approach to help individuals become aware of their emotions without judgment. The conversation concluded with Annie explaining the importance of creating safety before attempting to make behavioral changes, and how coaches can help clients learn to regulate their own emotions and become self-sufficient in maintaining emotional safety.

## **Beyond Binary Thinking for Freedom**

Annie explored the human tendency to grasp onto binary thinking and how transcending these dichotomies leads to greater consciousness and freedom. She discussed the importance of moving from digital (binary) to analog (gradual) thinking, drawing on philosophical concepts from both Western and Eastern traditions. Annie emphasized that stress often arises from being stuck in polarity thinking, and she shared how this concept applies to relationships, where true love requires a balance between integration and differentiation.

## **Emotional Conflict Resolution Strategies**

Annie and Sharman discussed strategies for managing emotional conflicts in relationships. Annie shared her approach of "pulling energy out of someone's space" by acknowledging their feelings without trying to change them, and recommended taking care of oneself when faced with an upset partner. She emphasized the importance of validating emotions without getting caught in the content of the conflict, and suggested that by removing one's need for the partner to change, the partner may naturally begin to regulate their own emotions.

## **Reframing Financial Conflict Discussion**

Sharman and Annie discussed financial conflicts in their relationship, with Sharman expressing a desire to establish a shared understanding and system for managing finances. Annie suggested reframing the conversation to focus on values and collaboration rather than money itself, advising Sharman to approach the topic with curiosity and without judgment. They

explored strategies for addressing defensiveness, with Annie emphasizing the importance of removing shame and blame from the discussion.

### **Specificity in Requests and Relationships**

Annie and Sharman discussed the importance of being specific when making requests, particularly in financial and relationship contexts. Annie emphasized that vague or abstract requests often lead to confusion and defensiveness, whereas specific needs and wants can help engage others more effectively. They explored how financial concerns and communication issues in Sharman's relationship might be intertwined with deeper emotional challenges. Annie suggested that addressing these concerns requires acknowledging and validating each other's needs while working towards more concrete solutions. The session concluded with Annie recommending a book, "Parenting from the Inside Out," as a resource for developing the skills needed to navigate such conversations.