



THE ICC ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

THE NEWSLETTER FOR GROWING GREAT COACHES

DECEMBER 2024

Powerful reflection techniques – for 2025 and beyond



Hi everyone,

We've nearly made it to Christmas, and a well-deserved break.

Amidst the end-of-year parties and Christmas shopping, your mind might turn to next year, and what's in store. Maybe you've already reflected on the year that's been, or intend to over the break.

As coaches, we're in favour of pausing to reflect, and to design a life that's satisfying and ideally in service of something bigger. But with a few nuances.

Firstly – coaching is generally future oriented, as clients clarify their goals and how they might reach them. This creates the risk that our clients live perpetually in the future, only allowing themselves to enjoy life when they reach the goal on the horizon. We have a responsibility to help clients set 'both / and' goals - meaning, goals that will be meaningful and rewarding as they are pursued, and once they are achieved.

This is particularly important given that humans display 'hedonic adaptation,' or a tendency to rapidly adapt to the good things in our lives. As such, achieving the big-picture goal may not deliver sustained happiness for our clients, as they'll adapt and then want to shift the goalposts out. Knowing this in advance, we can help our clients to enjoy the process or the journey – ie the bulk of their lives!

The second nuance is that while reflection is valuable, we often don't stretch out our time horizon far enough. We look to the recent past and the near-term future and design our lives from there, rather than taking a larger step back or forward, and seeing how things look.

With that in mind, today's newsletter will help you to reflect – on 2024-25, AND on your childhood and your older years. We hope it's useful.

Reflecting on '24, projecting to '25

You can readily find lists of reflection questions on the web, and we encourage you to seek out questions that resonate. Here at ICC Academy, we believe that the good life is one of purpose, pleasure or joy, and growth - so we've tailored our reflection questions to suit.

- What felt purposeful to you, this year?
 - What were you doing?
 - What values were you expressing?
 - Where were you, and who were you with?
- What was pleasurable or restorative for you, this year?
 - What were you doing?
 - What values were you expressing?
 - Where were you, and who were you with?
- In what ways were you challenged this year, and how did you grow or change as a result?
- What changes will you make in 2025, to enjoy more purpose, pleasure or growth?
- What might get in the way of these goals, and how can you avoid the roadblocks?

Perhaps you have too many goals that you want to pursue, and you're feeling overwhelmed. In that case, you may find value in Marie Forleo's 'purge and prune' process for 2025. It's a simple two-step approach.

- First, you purge. You jot down ALL the things you'd like to accomplish, achieve or experience, both personally and professionally. For instance, you might have goals relating to your health, family, job, travel etc. Get it all on the page.
- Then you prune. You decide on the 'critical few' goals that you'd like to prioritise, and you cross out the rest. If a goal doesn't make your shortlist, it doesn't mean it's gone forever – just that it won't be a priority in 2025. Use your own values to decide what to keep, and remember, less is more!

Looking back to childhood & forward to future you

As we said, there's value in looking further back and further forward, to help crystallise who you are and where you'd like to head. Here are some techniques to help.

A conversation with younger you

To look back, we recommend having a conversation with your younger self – a technique we've borrowed from psychotherapy. According to UK-based psychotherapist and author, Anna Mathur, "talking to your younger selves can help us both appreciate our accomplishments and uncover our goals." In other words - it's a way to remember how far you've come - and what you really want, underneath the layers of socialisation and 'shoulds'.

You can run this conversation in any way that feels right. We recommend deciding on which age 'you' you're talking to, and then how you'd like to connect. You could write a letter, or talk to an empty chair, or find a photo of younger you and talk to that. Treat it like a real conversation – say hi, ask how they're going, ask if there's anything they want to share, and go from there. It sounds odd, but it can be a very powerful experience, and you may need some tissues!

A snapshot of future you

At ICC Academy, we help people to set big audacious goals, using techniques like the Window Walk, and then identify how to bring those goals to life. It's a powerful approach that balances the big-picture view with concrete plans.

The following technique is a little different – and we've borrowed it from the author Glennon Doyle. The focus is more on who you are, and your identity and values, than what you're doing.

As Doyle explains, she intentionally brings to life a vision of herself when she is 70 or 80. She observes that person and what they are like, how they feel, what's important to them, and how they move through the world.

In her words,

"It's not totally thought through, but I am walking on a beach slowly. . . I have long, wild, curly grey hair. I am wearing very loose, colourful, robe-y type clothes. She is connected, but also free because she's a little quirky. . . She's very calm. . . She is a part of the community, but not busy. And she is just surrounded by things she loves and people come to her for wisdom. She is at peace in herself and her life."

The value of this sort of visual, identity-based exercise is that it can help you to make decisions in the short- and medium- term, that align with *who you really want to become* in the longer term. There's less risk that you will *solely* pursue extrinsic motivators like status, wealth and quantifiable achievement, which, because of the hedonic treadmill we mentioned earlier, don't tend to deliver lasting satisfaction.

As Doyle puts it,

"You have, at the end of your life, become yourself as opposed to trying to be what the world told you to be."

Or to paraphrase Matthew McConaughey, you're ultimately chasing yourself.

Living – in the now

With all this looking back and looking forward, there's one time period we forgot to mention. The glorious now!

So once you've committed time to reflection, goal setting, and identity-based aspirations, see if you can bring your attention back to this moment. You may like to try a 'delight' practice, which is a subset of mindfulness developed by Ross Gay. It's very simple. When something is delightful – like a sparkling sea, or the dawn chorus, you point your finger at it and say out loud, Delight! The practice shifts your attention to the present moment, and helps you to notice and savour the positive, which has been associated with better mental health.

With that, we hope you have a delightful Christmas and New Year, and we'll see you back in 2025!

The team at ICC Academy

2024-2025 DATES FOR COACH TRAINING

FOUNDATION COACH TRAINING

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

Module 1:

12th and 13th February

Module 2:

26th and 27th February

Module 3:

12th and 13th March

Module 4:

26th and 27th March

JUNE/JULY 2025

Module 1:

4th and 5th June

Module 2:

18th and 19th June

Module 3:

2nd and 3rd July

Module 4:

16th and 17th July



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