



# THE ICC ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

THE NEWSLETTER FOR GROWING GREAT COACHES

JULY 2025



Hi everyone,

Have you heard of 'nature coaching'?

The premise is simple – you host coaching conversations whilst walking, ideally in a natural setting like a park, the bush, or the beach.

But simple tools can be surprisingly powerful. So today, we're going to step you through some of the evidence in support of 'walking and talking in nature,' and provide some practical tips for those of you who want to give nature coaching a try.

## In support of walking

We all know that we should sit less and move more, for the sake of our bodies. But walking is also medicine for the mind.

Walking helps to activate our parasympathetic nervous system – or the 'rest and digest' system, rather than the sympathetic nervous system with its fight / flight / freeze response. As our stress response is down-regulated, we can think about our challenges more clearly, and more constructively.

Moving our bodies also releases a cocktail of endorphins, like dopamine, serotonin and others which have been proven to foster "a more open and spacious mindset," according to experts quoted in the [Sydney Morning Herald](#). In other words, a mindset that's conducive to coaching.

Perhaps best of all, walking can change the frequency of our brainwaves, in ways that are beneficial for our sense of time, haste, and stress. According to Dr Stan Rodski, a clinical psychologist and neuroscientist quoted in the same article, "If I were to summarise all of my learning over 40-odd years, I'd say that most people's stress starts with the complaint: I don't have enough time." Walking can change the way we perceive time, as it helps us to drop into a slower brainwave state like the type people enjoy when they meditate. When we're in this state, our mindset becomes expansive and less focused on time which means our sense of stress also subsides.

In short – walking is a win.

## In support of walking and talking

While humans have been walking and talking together for hundreds of thousands of years, we're only just gathering evidence that confirms its therapeutic value. For instance, staff in a tech company engaged in 6-8 coaching-style sessions, whilst walking outdoors. The participants [found](#) "the natural, calming effect of the outdoors, combined with the movement of walking, facilitated a sense of freedom to express themselves and, in doing so, maximise the benefits of the therapeutic space. These included gaining a broader perspective, heightened self-awareness and greater acceptance of oneself, others and life's challenges."

Therapists and psychologists are also [increasingly fond](#) of walk-and-talk therapy. It can help clients to become 'unstuck,' and the process of walking side by side encourages a more collaborative, open way of working together.

Self-awareness, perspective, acceptance of challenges, a collaborative approach, and the feeling of getting unstuck – those are pretty big wins, for something as simple as walking and talking! But there's a third string to this bow . . .

## In support of walking and talking *in nature*

We recommend that you walk and talk in nature, if that's at all possible. You don't need a glorious, Instagram-worthy backdrop, a visit to the local park, or beach, or bush track will work well too.

Experts are increasingly advocating for nature as a therapeutic tool, in part because of the research on ['forest bathing'](#) or Shinrin-yoku, that's coming out of Japan. This research has shown that walking in nature, rather than in urban settings, leads to decreases in heart rate, blood pressure and cortisol levels, and again, a down-regulation of the overall stress response. What's more, Vitamin D from sunlight can boost mood, and help people to sleep better at night. And looking at fractals or repeated patterns in nature, like trees, leaves, flowers, waves, and clouds for even just 10 seconds, can reduce people's physiological stress levels by [about 60%](#)!

The point here is that when you take your coaching outdoors – and walk and talk in nature, you increase the chances of having a really fruitful conversation. The conditions are ripe for insight and personal development.

## Tips and tricks to make it work

- **Try some low-risk experiments.** Nature coaching is a novel concept and it's worth checking how it goes in practice, for you and your client. You may like to practice 'coaching' a friend whilst walking in nature, and seeing how it goes. Or you could ask one of your most loyal clients if they'd like to experiment with this format, for one session.
- **Check the weather.** This one is obvious particularly in Winter in the Southern Hemisphere, when it's often so wet outside. (But you could argue that makes it more important to get outside when you can)! Check the weather ahead of time, and again on the day. Make sure you have a back-up venue sorted, if the weather changes.
- **Think through the logistics.** In advance, have a think about:
  - The route you will take, and how it incorporates nature.
  - How long it will take to walk that route, at a pace that allows for easy conversation. Use Google Maps to estimate the timing, or just walk it in advance.
  - How to avoid main roads, traffic and excessive background noise, which could hinder the coaching process.
  - How to take key notes in an unobtrusive way. If you typically take notes. See if you can write easily enough with pen and paper, while walking. If not, try capturing 'voice notes' or audio recordings on your phone.
  - How to get in touch easily with your client, if you're meeting somewhere other than your office. Ideally swap phone numbers, or have each other's email on hand.
- **Retain a good structure.** Remember this is still a coaching conversation, even if it's in a different format. Retain your 'usual' coaching structure with your client, for instance, getting clear about what your client wants to focus on, digging in to the current state and the barriers to progress, and so on. When you're changing one thing (the context) it's best to keep other things the same (ie the content or structure).

We hope we've inspired you to give nature coaching a try – and if you do, let us know how it goes!

Thanks all, see you next month.

**The team at ICC Academy**

Coaching for  
**diversity, equity**  
inclusion & belonging

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## 2025/2026 DATES FOR COACH TRAINING

FOUNDATION COACHING CERTIFICATE

### NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

- Module 1:**  
5th and 6th November
- Module 2:**  
19th and 20th November
- Module 3:**  
3rd and 4th December
- Module 4:**  
17th and 18th December

### FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

- Module 1:**  
11th and 12th February
- Module 2:**  
25th and 26th February
- Module 3:**  
11th and 12th March
- Module 4:**  
25th and 26th March



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