

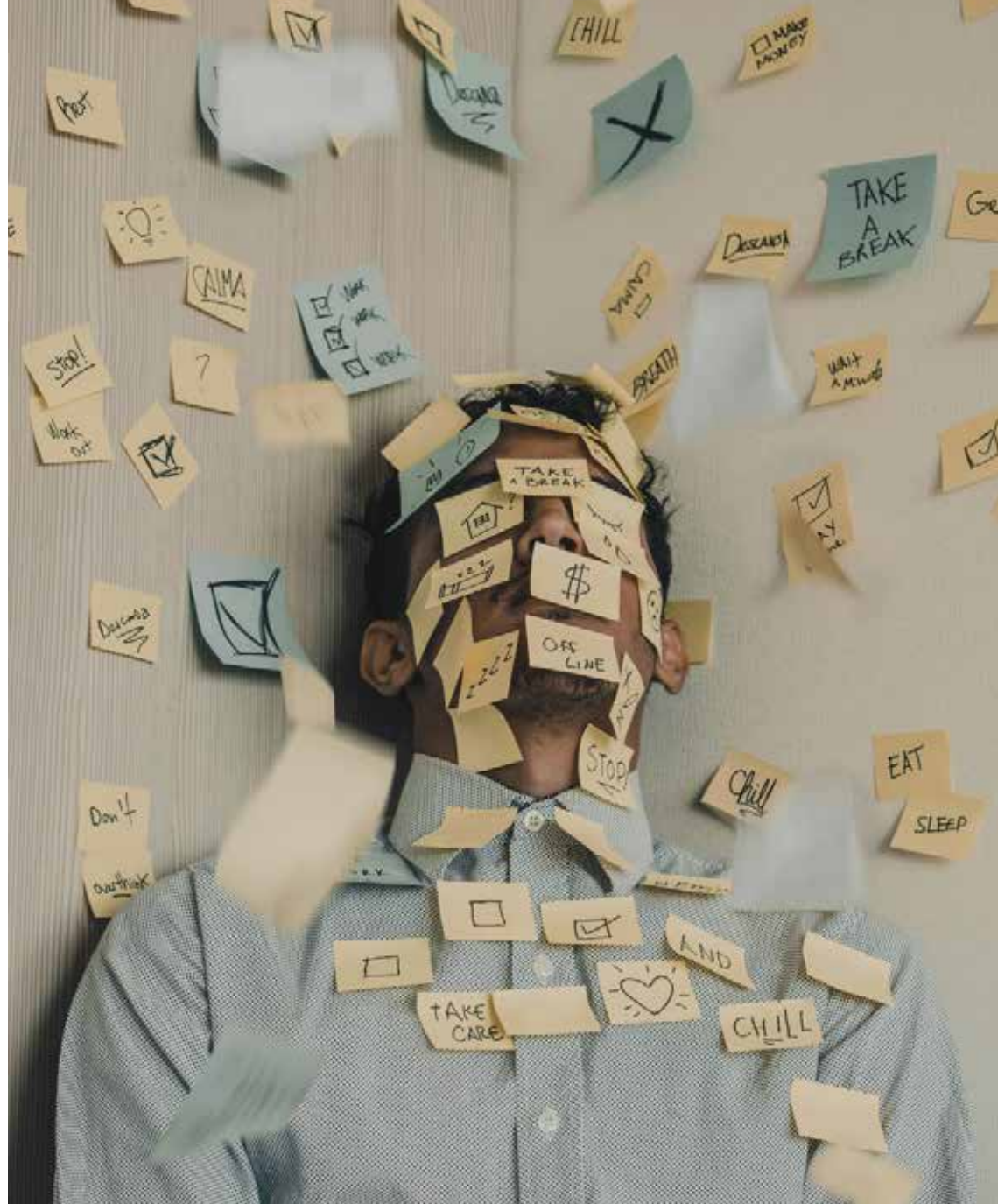


# THE ICC ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

THE NEWSLETTER FOR GROWING GREAT COACHES

NOVEMBER 2024

## Your Guide to a Calmer Pre-Christmas Season



Hello coaches and friends,

We are nearly at that extremely busy time of year when we all get into juggle mode - combining regular work with a packed schedule of social commitments and Christmas planning. It's what Glennon Doyle calls, "The MOST time of the year." The most wonderful time, perhaps, the most social, but often the most hectic.

As coaches, we need to be calm and centred to do our best work. But how can you achieve that sense of calm, if you feel overwhelmed by your to-do list? That's what we'll unpack today.

### At work: Don't obsess over clearing the decks

Many of us are complicit in a fantasy – that it's possible to 'clear the decks' before Christmas, getting through all of our work so that we might enjoy complete serenity over the summer break. It's understandable. But it drives many of us to exhaustion, come December 25<sup>th</sup>.

As Oliver Burkeman points out, 'clearing the decks' tends to create more work. For instance, if you aim for inbox zero by responding to those last 100 messages, you'll likely receive 100 email replies, which requires you to reply 100 times. And on and on.

Clearing the decks doesn't work because, for the most part, we exist in *dynamic relationship* with others. To clear our deck, or get through our to-do list, is to shift a task onto someone else's to-do list, which they are also frantically trying to clear. So if you've finished drafting a report (done!), then you've created work for the designer (to do), and the reviewer (to do). It's like hot-potato, and we're all throwing the task to each other, hoping we don't have to hold it over the Summer break. It's helpful to accept, up front, that you might be left holding the proverbial potato. And you'll be back at work in a few weeks, when you can deal with it.

### At home: Do less, but better

Dieter Rams was an influential product designer, whose clean aesthetic influenced Apple and other major brands. He's relevant here because one of Ram's key design principles was to 'Do less, but better' – ensuring a product performed its key function very well, without being 'burdened with non-essentials.'

We think a 'less but better' approach could be usefully applied to Christmas and holiday planning. For instance, how would it feel to –

- Give fewer gifts, but more thoughtful and personalised ones?
- Prepare fewer dishes at Christmas, but take your time on a few?
- Attend fewer social events, but be fully present when you're there?

### Before coaching: Become an empty vessel

The most effective coaches can serve as an 'empty vessel,' listening attentively and without agenda. If you need to clear your mind before coaching, you could try:

- **Creating some 'white space' in your diary**, eg a 5-10 minute buffer before any coaching session.
- **Jotting down all of the things that are on your mind**, for instance, your to-do list and things you need to remember.
- **Box breathing** – breathing in for a 4-count, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4. This type of breathing upregulates the parasympathetic nervous system, and will make it easier for you to concentrate on your client.
- **Actively fostering a service mindset**. Bring your next client to mind, and spend a few minutes reflecting on the growth they have achieved to date, the transformation they are seeking, and how you will seek to serve and support them, on their journey. You could also 'thank them' in your mind, for trusting you to walk alongside them.

### After coaching: Take steps to avoid 'second-hand frazzle'

Emotional contagion is a real phenomenon – it occurs when we 'catch' the emotions of people who we spend time with. While emotional contagion is generally a good thing, as it forms the basis of empathy (and it is notably lacking in psychopaths), you may become exhausted if you're talking to a stream of clients who are themselves frazzled, or exhausted.

To avoid this 'second-hand frazzle,' you may like to:

- **Complete a debrief form**, to help you process the conversation. Write more extensively in a journal, if you found a session particularly triggering.
- **Inject a break state**, or change your context in some way, to disconnect from the session and all of the associated feelings. For instance, you could try listening to music; dancing, walking or running; or shifting to a different work location.
- **Talk to a supervisor or friend**, if you have had a challenging session. Professional supervision or therapy, where there is a greater risk of secondary trauma. But it's still helpful to talk to someone – so reach out to a friend, or to your ICC training cohort.
- **Establish a 'downshifting' ritual**, to help you switch off at the end of the day. In 'The Blue Zones of Happiness,' Dan Buettner identified that happier societies often have 'downshifting' rituals to mark the end of the work day – including taking a nap, prayer, remembering ancestors, and of course, happy hour!

In a similar vein, leadership development and burnout expert, Nick Petrie, has found that people are at higher risk of burnout if they cannot stop thinking about work, at the end of the day. But some people excel at switching off. These people don't spend their commute sending emails, or even listening to podcasts and reading. They intentionally switch from work mode to personal mode, by "disconnect[ing] from their work tasks, emotions and identities (I am a boss, business owner, C.F.O.) and reconnect[ing] with personal relationships, activities and identities (I am a mum, dad, spouse, tennis player, gardener)."

It's worth a try!

We hope those tips have been thought-provoking and useful.

Finally, thank you to those of you who read our first White Paper, on the role of coaching in supporting organisational change and transformation. If you missed it, you can download the report [here](#).

The next two white papers will be out soon – keep your eye out.

Wishing you a festive and frazzle-free lead up to Christmas!

The team at ICC New Zealand

## 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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