

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads across the globe, so do anxiety and confusion. Working as an executive Coach from Belgium, where drastic measures have been imposed this WE, on individuals and businesses, has caused me to reflect and think about coaching in this “*business as unusual*” time. The fears and negativity we are experiencing stem from how little we know about COVID-19. As coaches, it is our role to embrace what we do know and aim to shift the negative mindset by establishing a safe and supportive environment that creates ongoing mutual respect and trust. Together, we need to rethink, renew and reconnect. Here's how we can practice this:

Rethink: the crisis has everybody rethinking and behaving more mindfully: washing our hands more, avoiding crowds and handshakes. I like to call this more mindful behavior “STOP mode”. Stop, take a breath, observe and proceed. I consider it the ideal mindset for approaching the unknown. We can take advantage of the current mindset to:

- Be here in the present, and grateful that most things are going well in life right now
- Acknowledge the fear, anxiety and worry as normal and part of (business)life
- Check in with our physical well-being
- Anticipate what aspects of our business might be affected (e.g., cancellations, shutdowns, ..)
- Think about what is going on in the minds of our clients and what might best serve them now
- Understand what is happening in our specific industry and perhaps rethink our offerings
- Take time to seek new opportunities that we may not have had time to think about before
- Evaluate how we are prepared for alternative modes of working, ...

Renew: as coaches, we see many ways to work with the client and choose which is most effective. Many contingency plans require remote work. The situation may even accelerate the development of a technology infrastructure that can support alternative types of working. After rethinking, we can be inspired to renew by:

- Continuing to be purposeful, realigning our values with our work
- Enjoying our free time and balancing our lives
- Seizing the opportunity to acquire new resources, in order to maintain productivity, renew, grow
- Reflect what we can stop doing, start doing and/or doing differently

Reconnect: stay connected with yourself and your clients, making adjustments where and when needed, to take advantage of this unusual situation, leading to lot's of opportunities to:

- Connect with clients by phone/ mail to communicate clearly about our renewals and agility
- Invite clients to share thoughts on how they anticipate their current or future needs
- Use social media to inform about aspects of the current situation that might help reassure
- Create private groups to encourage clients, ask questions or share concerns
- Draw strength from loved ones, to help us all stay strong and optimistic
- Maintain meaningful connections to keep relationships alive and attitudes positive

We do not know how long the anxiety and confusion will last, once business and daily activity return to “usual,” but we can leverage this opportunity to grow, be strong and feel better afterwards.

Take care & See you soon,

Freddy

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