Gestalt Coaching Assessment

Gestalt coaching offers a valuable way to help individuals learn, grow, and change
Gestalt Coaching Assessment

Gestalt coaching offers a valuable way to help individuals learn, grow, and change.

Gestalt coaching firmly believes and teaches coaches how to build and maintain a strong relationship throughout the coaching process. Simon (2009) states that, “Gestalt theory, above all, offers a theoretical approach to learning.” Gestalt coaching helps support growth and development for clients.

Walk (2009) aligns the coaching experience to Gestalt concepts and behaviors in her definition of coaching from a Gestalt perspective: Coaching is an action learning experience between a coach and a client that builds on the client’s desire to do something differently in the future; it explores the possibilities for change and the resistance related to change.

While there are many approaches to coaching, Peter Bluckert explains the unique connection between learning, personal change and Gestalt theory this way, “At the heart of Gestalt coaching lie a number of important ideas about the nature of human functioning and how learning and change take place.” Among these are the following points paraphrased from Bluckert (2006):

- Awareness leads to change.
- A coach helps clients to become more aware of their own ways of functioning.
- Heightened awareness produces a greater understanding of what is needed and what choices are open. It also produces more effective decision-making and action.
- Awareness-raising processes produce greater personal ownership and responsibility.
- Emerging, dominant needs organize our field of perception.
- Giving meaning to our perceptions and experience helps to gain closure around issues.
- Learning occurs through the examination of here and now experiences.

These concepts are directly linked to Gestalt theory and practice. The coach who chooses to employ a Gestalt-based model needs to understand how core Gestalt concepts and behaviors can enhance one’s coaching practice.

This assessment will provide you with understanding of core Gestalt coaching concepts and behaviors that you can use in future coaching sessions.

FIRST, please read the instructions on page 2 and begin the assessment that appears on page 3.
Gestalt Coaching Assessment

Instructions

This questionnaire is designed as a self-scoring assessment based in Gestalt coaching concepts and behaviors that will help you understand more about your skills or abilities in the three stages of Gestalt coaching. The 30 statements represent coaching behaviors that align with Gestalt concepts and behaviors.

Introduction to the Assessment

Gestalt-based coaching offers a valuable way to help individuals learn, grow, and change. This assessment will help identify your use of Gestalt-based practices in your coaching sessions.

Directions

On the following page you will find 30 statements. Read each statement and consider how often you believe you demonstrate each statement in a coaching session. Please use the response scale below and circle your choice for each statement.

1 – Almost Never  2 – Rarely  3 – Sometimes  4 – Often  5 – Almost Always

Follow directions on each page to move forward in the assessment summary and evaluation.
Gestalt Coaching Assessment

Scale: How often do you believe you demonstrate these behaviors in a coaching session?
1 – Almost Never  2 – Rarely  3 – Sometimes  4 – Often  5 – Almost Always

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish a personal connection with the client to begin the session</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Set an optimistic tone at the start</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Express genuine interest in the client</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ask questions to raise the client’s awareness of the current situation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stay in the present with the client</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Listen with curiosity and stay engaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pay attention to the client's energy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Show empathy and understanding where appropriate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pay attention to your own emotions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Identify the client’s goal for the session</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Create agreement and a contract on an issue to explore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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Add circled answers 1 - 11. Total: __________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Use powerful questions to help the client increase awareness of the issue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Separate data presented from interpretations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>State comments succinctly, clearly, and directly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Notice relevant polarities and possibilities in behaviors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Point out client behaviors and perspectives that are well developed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Identify client behaviors and perspectives that are less developed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Notice the client’s body language, non-verbals, tone of voice, and pauses in the conversation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Help the client raise awareness that leads to a choice or decision</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Help the client recognize and appreciate responses that show resistance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Suggest an experiment or activity to try in the session</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Discuss the impact of the experiment or activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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Add circled answers 12 - 22. Total: __________

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Reinforce progress made on the issue in the session</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Help the client mobilize energy for action</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Help the client create a plan for outcomes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Encourage activities, exercises, or assessments between coaching sessions, if appropriate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Help the client identify on-going support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Establish client accountability for outcomes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ask the client to speak about insights and discoveries in the session</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Seek feedback on the value of the session</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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Add circled answers 23 - 30. Total: __________
# Scoring

## Totals:

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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total score for items 1-11; This is your total score for the <strong>Beginning Stage</strong> of Coaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total score for items 12-22; This is your total score for the <strong>Middle Stage</strong> of Coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total score for items 23-30; This is your total score for the <strong>Ending Stage</strong> of Coaching</td>
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## Averages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Calculate the average score for the <strong>Beginning Stage of Coaching</strong> (divide your total score in # 1 by 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Calculate the average score for the <strong>Middle Stage of Coaching</strong> (divide your total score in # 2 by 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Calculate the average score for the <strong>Ending Stage of Coaching</strong> (divide your total score in # 3 by 8)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reflections on Your Results

1. What stands out for you in your results?

   **Totals:**
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

   **Averages:**
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. In which stage of coaching would you like to demonstrate the behaviors more frequently?
   __________________________________________________________

3. What specific items would you like to do more frequently?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. What items would you like to do less frequently, if any?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. Write your initial reflection on the results of your coaching assessment:
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
The Background of Gestalt Coaching

The Cycle of Experience

The Cycle of Experience (COE), a core Gestalt concept, helps to clarify the stages and, ultimately, many of the coaching concepts that are based in Gestalt theory.

The phases of the cycle include:

- Sensation
- Awareness
- Energy/Mobilization
- Action/Implementation
- Withdrawal/Meaning Making Assimilation

Dorothy Siminovitch (2013) describes the Cycle of Experience as “a conceptual model that illustrates how needs are sensed, articulated, engaged with, acted upon and assimilated through meaning making processes.”

The following model shows how Coaching stages of Beginning, Middle and Ending are mapped to the Cycle of Experience.
Gestalt Coaching Concepts and Behaviors

The following Gestalt coaching concepts and behaviors are utilized during a coaching session:

1. Building contact and a trusting relationship
2. Demonstrating presence
3. Utilizing an optimistic stance
4. Building awareness
5. Exploring ideas and concepts
6. Exploring the Paradoxical Theory of Change
7. Identifying polarities
8. Attending to what is well-developed/less developed in the client’s behavior
9. Appreciating resistance as a part of learning
10. Developing and doing experiments or trials that support learning
11. Ending the session

Gestalt Coaches think of the process of coaching as occurring in three stages with transitions occurring between the stages. The stages are: **Beginning, Middle, and Ending.**

Gestalt concepts and behaviors align well with the International Coach Federation (ICF) Core Coaching Competencies. Please refer to Appendix 1 of this booklet for a table that shows the alignment.
Contact represents the initial behaviors shown by the coach to establish a trusting learning relationship. Gestalt coaching practices encourage creating a personal connection with the client to build rapport and trust. The coach shows a genuine interest in the client by demonstrating openness, approachability, and interest. This leads to a feeling of safety and trust between coach and client.

Stuart Simon (2009) identifies the critical importance of contact:

*The quality of the coach/client relationship first and foremost determines the effectiveness of the coaching. Perhaps no other aspect of a Gestalt approach to coaching is more important than the practitioner’s intention to facilitate contact and trust with the coaching client. This connection is critical, because while coaches may in fact have a great deal to teach a client, a precondition of learning is that the client be available to be taught – to be interested in and excited about a partnership for learning.*

Also important in the Gestalt view of “contact” is the collaborative nature of the coaching process. Gestalt coaches view themselves as partners rather than working in a hierarchical teacher/student relationship. In addition, effective contact in the beginning phase creates excitement and energy for collaborative learning that impacts both the client and the coach.
Presence of Coach

An important Gestalt concept suggests that an individual has the ability to impact others because of “presence.” Presence is described as knowing who we are, how we interact, our disposition, and the impact our life experiences have had on us.

Being fully present is the starting point for building good relationships and connections with others; this requires the coach to be authentic. Good connections and full attention start the coach towards authenticity.

Coaching presence is not a neutral presence. The coach is there to affect things and have impact. Stuart Simon and Sharona Halpern developed the following list of abilities and behaviors based on the work of Edwin Nevis (1996), which outlines the following skills as part of presence:

- Ability to stay in the present in order to focus on the ongoing process.
- Sensitivity to the sensory/physical functioning of self and other(s).
- Ability to separate data from interpretation.
- Frequent “turning in” to your own emotional reactions and others,
- Ability to put things succinctly, clearly, and directly,
- Awareness of your intentions, of what you want to do or say.
- Ability to see where the client is at any time, and to respect that as you work.

Stevenson (2005) also points out the importance of presence for the Gestalt coach:

_The Gestalt coach is trained to become an awareness expert by remaining focused on the present. The goal is to be as fully present with oneself and with the client as possible, thereby enabling awareness or heightened existing awareness in the client system._

Optimism

While taking a realistic view of the present, Gestalt coaches show an optimistic stance in their work with clients. Melnick and Nevis (2005) have described the concept of optimism as one’s “orientation to the future ... a forward leaning, open and interested orientation.”

The Gestalt coach works with the client in a shared belief that focuses on growth, learning, and self-actualization. Thus, the coach encourages the client to be open to possibilities, potentialities, and opportunities. The Gestalt International Study Center (2010) states the concept of optimism in this way:

_Gestalt takes a realistic view of the present and an optimistic view of the possible preferring to work in the development of the potential within an individual or system rather than correcting them._
Simon (2009), helps clarify the importance of optimism for building trust and a strong connection with the client:

*Building trust ... requires genuine interest in the client, and the availability of the coach to be “contacted.” It requires the coach to be authentically optimistic that the client is doing the best they can, that their skills and competencies will be appreciated, that a coach/client connection can result in a working partnership, and that, if there is a joint understanding of the client’s situation, this partnership can create solutions.*

**Awareness**

The starting point for change is to fully appreciate *what is* current reality and that is achieved by raising awareness. Awareness can be seen as special insights into one’s experiences or information we gather at various levels: about oneself, about others, or about a situation.

Polster and Polster (1973) defined special elements that illuminate what a Gestalt coach recognizes as awareness.

*Awareness is an ongoing process, readily available at all times, rather than a sporadic illumination that can be achieved-like an insight-only at special moments or under special conditions. It is always there...ready to be tapped into when needed ... furthermore, focusing on one’s awareness keeps one absorbed in the present situation.*

The Gestalt coach works with the client to focus on present issues and clarify what’s important. Maurer (2011) states that the coach’s job “is not to give her the answer but to help heighten her awareness of how she is looking at, and expressing, this situation.” In this way, the Gestalt coach does not attempt to direct the client toward a choice of topic or issue. Through open questions, the coach facilitates exploration and choice, but without direction. As Maurer further states, “… we are there to heighten awareness so our clients can make better choices.”
**Exploration**

In exploration, the Gestalt coach and the client collaborate to help the client examine an issue in the client’s current reality. Several steps occur in exploration:

1. The client identifies a goal for the discussion. The coach and client agree and contract around that issue.
2. The coach asks questions to help the client understand thoughts and feelings about the issue. This helps the client deepen understanding of the issue.
3. The coach shows interest, curiosity, and support as the client explores the issue, clarifying data presented and checking on understanding.
4. The coach observes and reflects the energy, language, and physical reactions shown by the client.
5. The coach and client use dialogue as the conversational discussion method. The coach listens without judgment and uses empathy to show acceptance and understanding of the client.
6. The coach facilitates discussion around both strategic, goal-oriented elements and personal, intimate elements. An effective balance supports direction and focus as well as feeling and emotion.
7. The coach also notices personal reactions to the discussion, presenting personal feelings and physical responses in a way to contribute to dialogue, but not to take over the topic.
Paradoxical Theory of Change

Arnold Beisser (1970) articulated a fundamental Gestalt principle known as the paradox of change. Beisser states that:

\[
\text{Change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not. Change does not take place through a coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him, but it does take place if one takes the time and effort to be what he is—to be fully invested in his current positions.}
\]

Beisser does not see the coach as “change agent,” but as a facilitator of awareness that allows a client to move forward toward choices and change only based on full understanding of one’s personal present strength and situation.

Gallwey (2000) stated:

\[
\text{“The first step in this better way to change lies in a non-judgmental acknowledgement of things as they are. Paradoxically, it is conscious acceptance of oneself and one’s actions as they are that frees up both incentive and the capacity for spontaneous change.”}
\]

Partridge and Spoth (2013) help clarify the coaching role as it pertains to the paradoxical theory of change:

\[
\text{The paradoxical theory of change underscores the polarities that exist in any change effort: the desire to be different and the inertia of remaining the same. Framed another way: the tension between the want and the current habit (e.g.: I want to be more focused (the want) versus trying to do everything (the habit).}
\]

Thus, the coaching role helps the client to become more fully aware of the present state while seeking something new. The Gestalt International Study Center (2010) states in the Summary of Core Concepts, “The challenge of the Gestalt practitioner is to raise the awareness of the individual, group or organization so that it decides to change itself.”

Polarities

The concept of polarities suggests two separate ends of a spectrum. Thus, a polarity identifies difference or opposition. The idea of a polarity also suggests attraction to one side and a rejection of the other side.

Gestalt takes the perspective that both ends of every polarity are important, depending on the circumstance. In Gestalt coaching, polarities help identify areas of behavior or perception that impact the client. Growth and development for the client requires recognition and appropriate utilization of both polarities.
Some examples of polarities include:

- Being self-reliant  --------------------------------- Relying on others
- Focusing on others  --------------------------------- Focusing on self
- Accommodating  ----------------------------------- Self-centered

The Gestalt coach helps identify polarities that help the client better understand issues, skills, and behaviors. Through questioning, the coach explores the client’s perspective of various dimensions that have significant varying possibilities, seeking value that might appear in either end of the spectrum.

Well Developed/Less Developed©
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The Gestalt International Study Center teaches “well developed” and “less developed” to describe how people tend to lean to one end of a polarity. Often, the client will identify with one end of a polarity and call it good. That means that the client may find the other end less valuable or desirable. These polarities may be behaviors, attitudes, self-perceptions, or characteristics.

A “well-developed” competency is something done over and over by the client. It comes easily to the client, in an almost automatic fashion. Yet, a “well-developed” competency has the potential to be overused. Overuse of any behavior or perspective may narrow one’s choices. Understanding Well Developed/Less Developed© theory allows for the opening of more possibilities in the client’s behavior.

Coaches who use Gestalt concepts and behaviors attend to what is well-developed/less-developed in the client’s behavior. Theoretically, the Gestalt coach believes that we all learn most easily when we have a rich experience of what we do well. Knowing what we do well supports us in becoming open to that which we have yet to learn. But there is significant insight when a client recognizes a “less developed” behavior or perspective, for this opens up a broader range of actions and choices.

Resistance

Resistance, as seen in Gestalt concepts, teaches the coach to view behaviors that push against change or maintain the status quo as normal human behavior. This view enables a client and coach to explore forces that facilitate or impede change. Gestalt encourages full exploration of forces that press toward change as well as forces that encourage status quo. Resistance may be protective and reasonable as an individual attempts to handle a situation. Raising awareness of resistance allows a coach additional ways to connect and explore awareness with a client.
Simon (2009) clarifies the concept of resistance as it appears in Gestalt coaching sessions:

_In Gestalt theory, resistance is neither a label nor a characteristic of a person, but rather a phenomenon that resides in the here and now relationship. Furthermore since all of us are attracted to that which is familiar and the same, as well as drawn to that which is new and different, Gestalt theory necessarily frames resistance to newness as an important aspect of healthy living...Consequently from a Gestalt perspective, the coach is encouraged to identify resistance in the coaching process as a normal response to that which feels too new or too different. It is this paradoxical process of raising awareness and supporting resistance that allows the client to have choice in creating an effective relationship for learning._

**Experiments or Trials**

Gestalt coaching concepts encourage the client to raise personal awareness, but Gestalt goes beyond “talking about” and moves the client toward action. The Gestalt coach encourages the client to “try out” or test new behaviors and ways of thinking in a safe, supported environment.

An experiment creates an opportunity for the client to demonstrate new behaviors and develop new skills that can be helpful for future situations. Acting out situations and engaging in dialogue facilitated by the coach can help the client build personal confidence and better handle interpersonal interactions.

The Gestalt coach will identify an opportunity to use an experiment with the client in a coaching session. The coach will suggest an activity or experience and allow the client to apply insights and learning within the safety of the coaching session. The process facilitates growth for the client as the client moves out of a comfort zone to test self-perceptions and personal competencies. Feedback and support given by the coach can help the client approach future activities confidently.

In addition to experiments or trials during a coaching session, a Gestalt coach may recommend tools, such as assessments, outside of the coaching session. These assessments can help the client deepen awareness of areas of strength and areas for additional development.

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*The Gestalt coach encourages the client to “try out” or test new behaviors and ways of thinking in a safe, supportive environment.*
Each coaching session leads to plans for Action/Implementation and to Meaning Making Assimilation in the Ending Stage. Together, the coach and client review the insights and learning gained in the session. Progress can be noted and additional support may be identified. Action plans lead to the closing of the session.

In the Ending Stage of a coaching session, the Gestalt coach will:

- Reinforce progress made on the issue in the session
- Provide positive feedback on results
- Help the client mobilize energy for action
- Help the client create a plan for outcomes
- Encourage activities, exercises, or assessments between coaching sessions, if appropriate
- Help the client identify on-going support
- Establish that the client is accountable for outcomes
- Ask the client to speak about insights and discoveries in the session
- Seek feedback on the value of the session
# Coaching Concepts Aligned with Behavioral Assessment Items

Review the chart of the assessment items and determine which of your behaviors within the Gestalt coaching concepts are well-developed and which are less-developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gestalt Coaching Concept</th>
<th>Behavioral Assessment Items</th>
<th>(✓) Well Developed</th>
<th>(✓) Less Developed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Contact and a Trusting Relationship</td>
<td>Establish a personal connection with your client to begin the session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Express genuine interest in the client</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating Presence</td>
<td>Stay in the present with the client</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing an Optimistic Stance</td>
<td>Set an optimistic tone at the start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Awareness</td>
<td>Ask questions to raise the client's awareness of the current situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pay attention to the client's energy</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Separate data presented from interpretations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify client's goal for the session</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Create agreement and a contract around the issue to explore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring Ideas and Concepts</td>
<td>Use powerful questions to help the client increase awareness of the issue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Listen with curiosity and stay engaged</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Show empathy and understanding for the client</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pay attention to your own emotions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State comments succinctly, clearly and directly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring the Paradoxical Theory of Change</td>
<td>Help the client raise awareness that leads to a decision to change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying Polarities</td>
<td>Notice relevant polarities and possibilities in behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending to Well-developed/Less developed in the Client’s Behavior</td>
<td>Point out client behaviors and perspectives that are well-developed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify client behaviors and perspectives that are less-developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appreciating Resistance as a Part of Learning</td>
<td>Notice the client’s body language, non-verbals, tone of voice, and pauses in the conversation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Help the client recognize and appreciate responses that show resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing and Doing Experiments that Support Learning</td>
<td>Suggest an experiment or activity to try in the session</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discuss the impact of the experiment or activity to try in the session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending the Session</td>
<td>Reinforce progress made on the issue in the session</td>
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<td>Help the client mobilize energy for action</td>
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<td>Help the client create a plan for outcomes</td>
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<td>Agree to activities, exercises, or assessments between coaching if appropriate</td>
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<td>Help the client identify on-going support</td>
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<td>Establish client accountability for outcomes</td>
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<td>Ask the client to speak about his/her insights and discoveries in the session</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seek feedback on the value of the session</td>
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</table>
To get the most from the Gestalt Coaching Assessment, think about a specific coaching discussion you recently held with a client. Consider the client and your relationship. As you reflect on the coaching session, note the insights you have gained from this assessment and your reflections.

- How did you connect and form a trusting relationship with the client?

- In what ways did you demonstrate presence?

- How did you communicate and encourage optimism?

- How did you help the client raise awareness during the coaching session?

- How did you help the client explore a key issue that arose in the coaching session?

- How did you help the client to raise awareness that led to choices or a decision by the client?

- What relevant polarities appeared in the session?

- What aspects of the client appeared as “well-developed?” “Less-developed?”

- How did you and the client address resistance?

- What experiment or trials did you use with the client?

- How did you end the session?
Final Reflections/Insights

Action Plan

Now that you have completed this self-assessment of how you use Gestalt coaching concepts, consider how you will use your insights.

How will you apply the Cycle of Experience in future sessions?

What will you do more frequently in the beginning phase of your coaching sessions?

What will you do more frequently in the middle phase of your coaching sessions?

What will you do more frequently in the ending phase of your coaching sessions?
Appendix 1: Gestalt Concepts Aligned with ICF Core Coaching Competencies

Gestalt concepts and behaviors align well with the International Coach Federation (ICF) Core Coaching Competencies. ICF is an organization that provides education, support, and credentialing for professional coaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gestalt Concepts and Behaviors</th>
<th>ICF Core Coaching Competencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Contact and Trusting Relationship</td>
<td>Setting the Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrating Presence</td>
<td>Co-Creating the Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing an Optimistic Stance</td>
<td>Co-Creating the Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Awareness</td>
<td>Communicating Effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Ideas and Concepts</td>
<td>Communicating Effectively and Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Paradoxical Theory of Change</td>
<td>Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Polarities</td>
<td>Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending to What Is Well-Developed/ Less Developed in the Client's Behavior</td>
<td>Communicating Effectively and Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciating Resistance as a Part of Learning</td>
<td>Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and Doing Experiments or Trials that Support Learning</td>
<td>Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending the Session</td>
<td>Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography


*Summary of Core Concepts Survey,* April 2010, Gestalt International Study Center, 2015 GISC Programs and Services, source from office@gisc.org


Author Biographies

**Donna Dennis, PhD, PCC**, is an executive coach and leadership development professional who is committed to bringing client’s evidenced-based tools and information so that client’s gain greater awareness and are able to achieve their goals. Selecting the right assessment for each situation is a hallmark of Donna’s approach to coaching and has in part motivated the development of the **Gestalt Coaching Assessment**.

Donna is a Professional Associate and is on the faculty of the Gestalt International Study Center. She has completed several certifications from GISC including *The Cape Cod Training Program*, *Finding Your Developmental Edge*, *Applying the Cape Cod Model in Organizations*, *Competency Development Program for Coach Certification* and *Executive Personality Dynamics for Coaches*. She is a certified Gestalt Coach as well as PCC certified through the International Coach Federation. In addition she is certified in a number of psychological assessments such as the Hogan Assessments, OPQ-32, 16 PF, CDR 3-D Suite, MBTI, CPI and DiSC. Certifications for Leadership 360s include the MLQ, Hay ESCI, EQ-i, The Leadership Circle, Booth 360’s and Strengthscope 360.

Donna has practiced as a consultant internally and externally, taught at major universities such as the Wharton Business School and the University of Pennsylvania. For the past twelve years, she has owned Leadership Solutions Consulting, LLC where most recently she has focused on working across distance and what leaders must do to successfully manage mobile workers. Donna designs, develops and teaches a number of live on-line courses for the American Management Association and GISC among them *Leading Virtual and Remote Teams* and *Coaching from a Distance*.

Donna is a graduate of the University of Illinois (B.S. and M.S. in Education) and earned a PhD from The Fielding Graduate Institute where her degree was in human and organization development with a focus on Adult Learning.

Volunteer work includes serving as a board member for the Independent College Fund of NJ and being the founding president of the NJ Human Resources Planning Group as well as supporting the Sourland Actor’s Guild and Montgomery High School, Skillman, NJ as costume designer.

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Emil J. Sadloch, President of SADLOCH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES, possesses deep experience in leadership development, training/learning, and human resource development. In work with clients, he provides services that yield visionary strategies, improve leadership and management skills, enhance communication in organizations, deepen engagement, and foster better team functioning.

Emil is a Certified Facilitator for The Leadership Challenge workshop and is an Authorized Partner for the Leadership Challenge from Wiley Publishing. He has provided the TLC workshop for federal government agencies, pharmaceutical, and retail clients. A Certified Coach in the Leadership Practices Inventory, he provides 360° feedback and one-on-one coaching for leadership development. In workshops, he uses various other assessments as valuable: LPI, MBTI Complete, EISA, Hay’s ESCI, MLQ, Clark Wilson, and LIFO. He is an instructor for Rutgers University’s Center for Management Development, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (undergraduate professor in Leadership Studies), and Center for Government Services.

Emil earlier served as Account Executive and Master Training Consultant for AchieveGlobal (ZengerMiller, Kaset, and Learning International). In these roles, he developed new business, wrote training materials, certified new instructors, and delivered executive support sessions. He was also Director of Training and Vice President, Human Resources for Thomas Cook Financial Services (New York and Princeton). He has provided training or consulting services for many organizations including: ATKearney, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Pep Boys Automotive, PPL, ASTM International, and SEPTA.

A graduate of Washington and Lee University, Emil holds a Master of Arts from Montclair State University. He completed additional graduate work in personnel management, industrial psychology, and general management at Rutgers and NYU. Emil was the President of the Mid-Jersey Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), a Steering Committee member for the Philadelphia Regional OD Network (PRODN), and a Program Committee member for Philadelphia Human Resource Planning Society (PHRPS). He is a member of the Gestalt International Study Center, bringing Gestalt coaching concepts and behaviors to his coaching work.

He is a former member of the Bucks County Human Relations Council: “Dedicated to promoting the value of diversity and addressing discrimination within Bucks County.” He facilitates the Tri-State Human Relations Coalition, a Philadelphia-area group individuals at municipal, county, state, and federal levels working to end discrimination and foster equality.

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Training in the Gestalt Coaching Assessment to develop coaching skills for leaders and coaches is available from Donna Dennis (donna@leadership-solutions.info) and Emil J. Sadloch (emil@sadloch.com). Please contact us directly.

The Gestalt International Study Center (GISC) is a nonprofit educational organization engaged in personal, professional, and organizational development worldwide. With offices located in South Wellfleet, MA, on Cape Cod, GISC offers a full curriculum of Gestalt-based learning experiences, supporting its mission to “provide tools to spark extraordinary change in leaders, organizations, practitioners and individuals.” Among GISC’s offerings is A Competency Development for Coach Certification: Skills for High-Impact Coaching, an ICF Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP). GISC also offers a complete array of continuing education training for coaches, as well as a broad selection of programs for leaders and other professionals. Please learn more at www.gisc.org.
Gestalt Coaching Assessment

The Gestalt Coaching Assessment offers a unique opportunity for determining and developing Gestalt behaviors and concepts. Created by two Gestalt coaches this assessment is designed to inform you of the skills, concepts and behaviors of each phase of the coaching process: Beginning, Middle and Ending.

The following Gestalt concepts and behaviors are discussed:

- Building contact and a trusting relationship
- Demonstrating presence
- Utilizing an optimistic stance
- Building awareness
- Exploring ideas and concepts
- Exploring the Paradoxical Theory of Change
- Identifying polarities
- Attending to what is well-developed/less developed in the client’s behavior
- Appreciating resistance as a part of learning
- Developing and doing experiments or trials that support learning
- Ending the session

The Authors

Donna J. Dennis is president of Donna Dennis Coaching, LLC a firm specializing in coaching to support leadership and team development.

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Endorsed by the Gestalt International Study Center