



GLOBAL  
COACHING  
INSTITUTE

# A GUIDE TO PROCESS-ORIENTED COACHING

Written by Rho Sandberg  
and Vicki Henricks

## A GUIDE TO PROCESS ORIENTED COACHING

The Global Coaching Institute offers a process-oriented approach to coaching.

When they first encounter this term, most of our clients and students understandably ask: **What exactly is Process-Oriented Coaching?**

In answering that, let's firstly think about **having a process orientation**. We can think of people, projects and things as being constant, fixed and static, or we can think of them as being in a constant state of dynamic flow and potentially evolution.

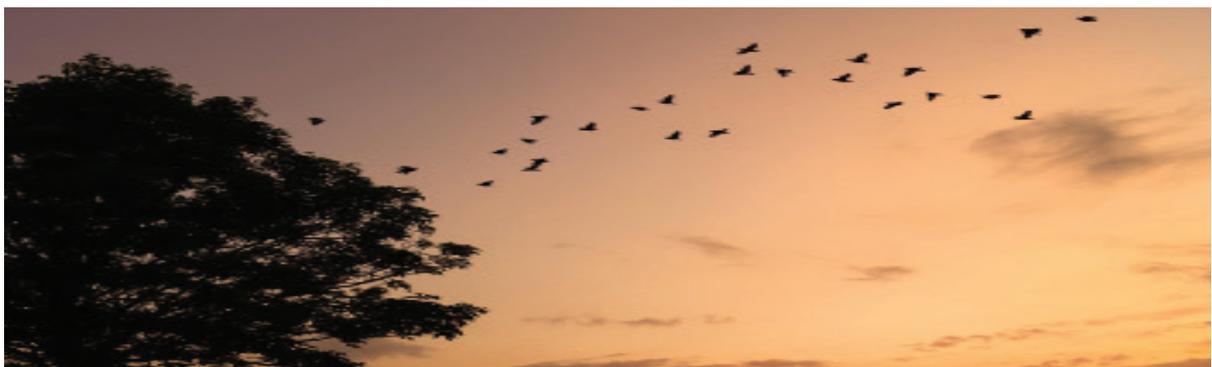
Process-oriented coaches are interested in the state of flow or change, through which systems and individuals grow and evolve. Rather than bringing fixed ideas about what is needed to address a situation, process-oriented coaches are keen students of the changing environment within an individual, team, community or organisation. They are alert to those elements which support a state of flow and discovery and those that result in stuckness, inertia or conflict.

When individuals and organisations find themselves stuck in out-dated habits and patterns, vital energy and potential is lost. These are the conditions in which businesses may falter, life crises are experienced, and individuals burn out. Process-oriented coaches view these situations as opportunities for potential growth and development. We work with clients to develop awareness of what they are experiencing - using both conscious and as-yet unconscious information, in order to support sustainable change.

There are two further attitudes that distinguish a process-oriented approach to coaching:

**Following Nature** or 'what is trying to happen'. In adopting a process-oriented approach, coaches follow the flow of the client and the organisation, believing that it is meaningful and important.

**The Coach As An Instrument of Change** is a fundamental premise of process-oriented coaching. Process-Oriented Coaches are deeply committed to cultivating their own awareness in order to facilitate learning and growth in their clients.





## The Roots of Process-Oriented Coaching

Process-Oriented Coaching draws on the theory of Process-Oriented Psychology, also known as Process Work, which Dr Arnold Mindell and his colleagues have been developing since the 1980's. Process-Oriented Coaching draws on the profound insights this discipline has contributed to the fields of human consciousness, depth psychology and systems thinking.

The deep roots of Process Work are in:

- Psychology, particularly Jungian psychology and the concept of the collective unconscious;
- Human consciousness studies, particularly Taoism and the concept that all opposites are necessary, inseparable and complementary;
- Physics, in particular quantum physics and the concepts of the role of the observer, the field and chaos theory.

Process Work theory also draws on other modalities such as Psychodrama, Gestalt, NLP, Bodywork, Constellations, Indigenous Wisdom, Vispassna, Zen, Information Theory and Systems Theory and more.

Over the years Process Work has developed into an awareness practice with applications to organisation and community development, diversity and leadership training, individual and relationship work.



1- Dr Mindell was a physics graduate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a teacher of Jungian psychology at the Jung Institute in Zurich, prior to founding Process Oriented Psychology.



## ***So what is unique in the process-oriented coaching approach?***

### **COACHING THE FLOW . . .**

#### **1. Working At Multiple Levels**

When busy people who shoulder loads of responsibility get stuck in a pragmatic, problem-solving approach to life, it's a recipe for burnout. Process-oriented coaches work at multiple levels of reality to inspire flow and multiple paths to emerging possibility.

Process-oriented coaches work toward tangible outcomes, cultivating the relationships and addressing the polarised conflicts or entrenched positions that can often delay progress. They work with those internal states of being that can radically transform experience and performance. They engage the dreams that guide and propel client's deepest sense of purpose or spiritual meaning.

#### **2. Exploring Identity**

Our notion of self has a fundamental influence on what we believe to be possible.

Process oriented coaches know that growth lies at the intersection of who we believe we are and who we might say we are not. For example, a coaching client may describe themselves as conflict avoidant and not 'good at managing workplace tensions'. Or they may think of themselves as modest and not 'the sort of person who likes to promote their achievements'.

In the realm of who we believe we are not, lies untapped capacity.

Process oriented coaches work with individuals and teams to expand their sense of what is possible and to reclaim lost or marginalised potential. At times this means working with deeply held belief systems.

Through our training programs, we develop an understanding of identity that is both multi-faceted and fluid. We appreciate the formation of each client's identity in the context of their own life experience, the environments and industries in which they work and the social systems in which they grew up and now live.

We take into account, our clients' personality, gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, social and collective identity. The depth and breadth of the process oriented coach's understanding of identity enables them to engage with diverse aspects of the client's experience, some of which are understood by them and others which exert a powerful influence, but are yet to be recognised.

Even more importantly, we work with clients to develop a dynamic and evolving sense of identity.

#### **3. Working At Edges**

Process oriented coaches are interested in deep and sustained growth, which is generative, rather than merely problem solving. We are not simply focused on helping people solve immediate crises, but on helping them to grow in ways that will serve them through their present situation and their whole lives.

Typically as individuals begin to grow, they encounter the forces that have limited them so far. Process-oriented coaches bring unique abilities in being able to pinpoint the edges that hold their clients back. In organisational settings this manifests as the ability to quickly help leaders and teams get to the root cause of a problem.

Training as a process oriented coach builds the refined acuity needed to spot the underlying edges that limit individuals, teams, organisations and social systems. It makes for a dynamic and efficient way of coaching.



## FOLLOWING THE CLIENT'S UNIQUE GROWTH TRAJECTORY

Process oriented coaches draw on multiple sources of information and insight in their coaching conversations – verbal and non-verbal, conscious and unconscious, intra-personal, interpersonal and systemic.

### 4. Tracking Signals

All process-oriented coaches learn to map the underlying 'process structure' or their client's learning trajectory, so they know which cues to follow. By following the client's signals, the coach can ask the question that will 'hit the mark, enabling the client to access their own deeper wisdom and solutions to their issues.

Process-oriented coaches differentiate between those verbal and non-verbal signals consistent with clients' habitual behaviour, and those which herald change. Understanding the difference results in powerful and efficient coaching.

### 5. Accessing Conscious & Unconscious Information

Process-oriented coaches are attuned to the conscious and unconscious information present in any coaching conversation. Accessing unconscious information is a route to the client's deepest wisdom—it moves conversation beyond the level of intellectual knowledge to deep wisdom.

Process-oriented coaches are interested in their client's bodily experiences, their dreams and things that seem to 'happen to' clients. Our coaches are trained to work with curiosity and a 'beginner's mind' or 'empty mind', as they support clients to access powerful new sources of information and insight.

Following unconscious as well as conscious cues allows process-oriented coaches to better understand their client's unique growth trajectory, guiding their questions

### 6. Following Feedback

At the Global Coaching Institute we train our coaches to develop a finely tuned antenna for important and sometimes subtle shifts in energy. This ability to follow energetic and verbal feedback brings exceptional acuity to coaching practice and differentiates process-oriented coaches in the marketplace.

Process oriented coaches learn to read positive and negative feedback, with both being seen as a valuable indicator of where sustainable growth lies for the client. By using the metaskills of genuine curiosity and detachment, process-oriented coaches can support their client in a direction that will give them deeper insights into the issues they are facing.



*hone your coaching acuity*



## MORE ON THE HOW ...

### 7. Being An Instrument of Change

Process oriented coaches understand firsthand the journey of personal and professional development. Throughout their training, our graduates have been supported through extensive coaching and supervision, to understand and embrace their own unique growth trajectory and life path. They have explored their own evolving sense of identity and navigated the edges that limit their potential and effectiveness as coaches, leaders and human beings. Their engagement in their own growth and development is ongoing.

This deep transformational commitment is evident in the powerful coaching presence our graduates bring to partnering deeply with their clients. It is also evident in their acuity and agility as they hold the creative tension and support their client's learning and discovery.



*become an agent for change*

### 8 Meta-skills

Change can be challenging, particularly when clients encounter life-long edges. Metaskills are the feeling attitudes, values and beliefs that inform the way coaches work with their clients. The meta-skills coaches bring to the coaching relationship are crucial. They build trust and rapport. The coach's own ability to venture into what might be new territory for the client—and to actually model the meta-skills they are seeking—can bring timely encouragement and support to clients.

As a Process-oriented coach, you will discover your natural style and anti-style as a coach and explore which meta-skills are most useful in which situations. You will discover the agility of a jazz musician, who recognises just what tone and tempo is needed in each moment. Having fabulous meta-skills is the hallmark of a masterful coach.

### 9. Bringing A Spirit of Deep Democracy

Process-oriented coaches welcome all dimensions of experience, the known and the unknown, the comfortable and the uncomfortable. This attitude of deeply valuing all parts of a person or system enables us to unlock the potential that becomes blocked when different parts of a person or team are in conflict. It supports teams to understand their differences, and promotes diversity and cultures in which issues thought to be 'undiscussable' are able to be addressed.



## ADOPTING A SYSTEMIC LENS ...

### 10. Applying Systems Thinking

When people come together, the outcome is more than the accumulation of individual effort. The relationship patterns, organisational culture, power dynamics and diversity—or lack of diversity—within any system all have a keen influence.

Process-oriented coaches help clients to access insights that are only available from a systemic vantage point, whether they are working with individuals or entire teams. Our graduates follow a robust framework enabling them to know what part/s of the system to address to ensure that desired changes are sustainable and the client's effort is well-placed. Our GCI Roadmap for Change [LINK] offers a framework for mapping some of these forces.

### 11. Working With Attractors and Disturbers

We currently find ourselves living in an era of disruption. Organisations and their leaders are seeking coaches who can help them navigate VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) environments.

Process-oriented coaches pay close attention to those forces—both attractors and disturbers—which prompt change within systems. They help their clients tap into and harness the potential they offer.

We bring an attitude of curiosity and appreciation to apparently disruptive forces, which helps to shift our clients' mindsets in the face of radical change, helping them to engage deep enquiry and achieve powerful breakthroughs.

Process-oriented coaches recognise that the seeds of a solution are usually inherent within the challenge itself. We help our clients to unlock the embedded solutions within seeming disturbances and to find the 'gold' within both their visions and their challenges.



*learn to adopt a systemic perspective*

### 12. Accessing The Quantum Field

Process-oriented coaches bring an understanding of 'field dynamics' to work with the unseen dimensions of organisational life, including the complex interaction between social, political and global trends and the client's immediate workplace.

Process-oriented coaches apply principles from quantum physics, which are now transforming fields and disciplines from computing to biology, from psychology to the social sciences. These principles are aligned to the wisdom of indigenous peoples, who have long recognised the power of the land upon our sense of wellbeing.

Process oriented coaches understand that they too are part of the 'quantum field' and work with their own intuition and felt experiences in the moment, to co-create fields which bring emerging insights into the coaching conversation.



## COACHING ROLES, POWER, RANK & DIVERSITY

Process oriented coaches bring a finely honed understanding of the interplay between diversity, power, rank and the way we occupy social and organisational roles.

### 13. Having Role Awareness

Process oriented coaches understand not only the formal dimensions of organisational and social roles, but recognise when roles such as leadership are being adopted informally.

Understanding the fluid nature of roles in organisations provides coaches and leaders with a far more agile approach to supporting organisational and social change and working with systems in conflict.

Process oriented coaches support leaders and change agents to understand role dynamics and to engage diverse stakeholders who often present with divergent needs and interests.

### 14. Understanding Power and Rank Dynamics

The attention paid by process-oriented coaches to power and rank dynamics is unparalleled in the coaching field. They bring insight into the different forms of power, what it takes to use power well in leadership roles, the challenges of connecting with personal power, and the dynamics of social marginalisation.

Process-oriented coaches cultivate awareness of their own rank in order to work more effectively with diverse populations.

### 15. Harnessing Diversity

Diversity exists not only within teams, organisations and systems, but within the individual him or herself.

Process oriented coaches hold a deep and fundamental commitment to supporting diversity to emerge. We believe that all attributes, styles and roles are needed and that problems often arise when our diversity is suppressed.

Our curiosity and acceptance of all facets of the client's experience, supports diversity to emerge.

Our attention to diversity and understanding of the power and rank issues often associated with it, provides a key contribution to the fields of coaching, organisational development and social change.



*explore roles and rank dynamics*

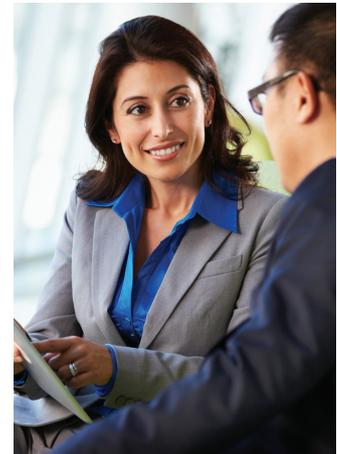


## ***Who Do Process Oriented Coaches Work With?***

Process-Oriented Coaches work with anyone interested in growing, developing and creating sustainable changes in their lives, families, businesses, organisations, and communities.

Many coaches work one-on-one, with executives, people in career transition, parents, students or people exploring their life choices.

Some of our graduates deepen their understanding of process oriented principles about working with body signals and dreams, to specialise in areas such as health coaching.



*expand your client base ...*

The **Global Coaching Institute** offers **internationally accredited** process-oriented coach training assuring prospective clients you have achieved the coaching profession's gold standard .



*... and coach from anywhere  
in the world ...*

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

visit our website: [globalcoachinginstitute.org](http://globalcoachinginstitute.org)

or ask about a FREE 20 minute session

by emailing us at: [info@globalcoachinginstitute.org](mailto:info@globalcoachinginstitute.org)

***... join our global community of process-oriented coaches today.***

