



THE TOP FIVE TIPS FOR COACH SUPERVISION

Part 2: Becoming a supervisor & being a great supervisee

By Julia Menaul

In Part 1: Finding a supervisor and establishing a relationship we looked at:

- the purpose of supervision
- expectations of supervision
- looking for a supervisor
- finding the right supervision method
- value versus cost of supervision
- establishing a contract

To be a great coach you need to be a great coachee first and the same is true for supervision. In part 2 we will look further at your role as the supervisee and how to get the best out of your relationship. We will also look at how an experienced coach may become a supervisor too.

The following 5 tips aim to help you to get the maximum benefit from supervision and look at how you can take supervision to the next level.

1. Make your supervision a regular occurrence

In the same way that we are told to exercise more and eat healthily so that it becomes an integral part of our lifestyle, then supervision requires you to see it not just as a “nice to have” but a necessary and crucial part of being a coach. Consider also your approach to supervision if you are not a full time coach but have a helping role that requires regular contact time with a client whether it is as a manager, consultant, mentor or advisor.

2. Once supervision is a regular part of your practise then set yourself higher goals.

Using the healthy lifestyle analogy, things can soon get into a rut if continued in the same vein for too long. So in the same way that you need to set new exercise goals when your body starts to get used to activity, then supervision also requires you to stretch yourself in new directions.

This means looking at yourself in a deeper way to understand some of the patterns that may be emerging throughout your entire client work rather than focusing on specific client issues. It could well be that you have habits of working with a number of clients that would not be spotted by having supervision around individual client issues.

3. Consider carefully your reasons for becoming a supervisor yourself

This might seem a strange tip but it is worth spending some time looking at your motivation in wanting to become a supervisor. Is it right for everyone? You may have been moved into that role via promotion or by virtue of being the most senior practitioner in your area. If you have worked in a more educational role then being a supervisor may be a natural development for you.

Many supervisors find their own client work is refreshed and revitalised by what they learn from their supervisees.

However, beware what Carl Jung called the shadow side. The parts of ourselves we do not wish to look at; we therefore make them a part of someone else. Some other hidden motives for becoming a supervisor can be:

- The need for power/authority and being superior to colleagues to boost our ego and hide our own anxieties
- Using supervision because we don't know how to get proper supervision ourselves so we erroneously give it to others instead!

4. Discover how your experiences could make you an ideal supervisor

So you are getting good regular supervision now. That's the first requirement to being a supervisor taken care of! You may also have been coaching for many years too and believe your experience is there to be shared.

However the qualities of a good supervisor may be subtly different from those of a good coach. Here is a selection:

1. Flexibility- use of different theories, models and techniques
2. Multi perspective view – seeing the world from different view points
3. A working map of the discipline in which they supervise e.g. familiarity with the corporate world for executive coachees
4. Ability to work trans-culturally – being aware of the influence of diversity issues for the supervisor, supervisee and client.
5. Capacity to manage and contain anxiety – own and supervisees
6. Openness to learning

7. Sensitivity to the wider contextual issues – ability to “helicopter” and switch focus from client to supervisee, from process to clients wider context, and then broader organisational issues
8. Handle power appropriately and be aware of anti oppressive practises
9. Humour, humility and patience.

Gilbert and Evans (2000) in Psychotherapy Supervision – An integrative relational Approach. Open University Press

You therefore may need extra training to develop some of the above.

5. Take your supervision skills to the next level with further training

At the time of writing it is not necessary to have a qualification in supervision to be a coach supervisor. As we discussed in Part 1 the Association for Coaching only recommends that a supervisor holds a recognised coaching qualification. Until recently there has been a dearth of supervision qualifications aimed at coaching professionals, although this is now changing.

Most good qualification programmes will focus on some core aspects of supervision, group supervision and specialist areas depending on the focus of coaching i.e. executive coaches may want to zone in on team supervision or supervision of internal coaches.

Like most things it is so often better to get some recommendations from colleagues or do some research via the internet. The courses below are just a few options to try and in no way constitute recognition by the AC.

www.bathconsultancygroup.com – certificate in supervision

www.thecoachingsupervisionacademy.com – accredited diploma in supervision

www.oscm.co.uk – post graduate certificate in supervision

And of course if you are having regular supervision you will need to consider with your supervisor whether you need to re contract to include having supervision on your supervision!

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www.sparkcoachingandtraining.co.uk

If you have found this guide helpful and would like further information on any aspect of coaching, please contact: www.associationforcoaching.com

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