

The Authentic Path Coaching Model

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Introduction

This coaching model is designed to support young graduates in discovering career paths that resonate with their true selves and bring a sense of purpose to their lives.

Navigating the job market can be a difficult experience for young graduates, often due to hurdles such as limited experience, unrealistic expectations, insufficient exposure to various industries, random application strategies, and the fast-evolving job landscape. Nevertheless, there are many opportunities available. Graduates can leverage their personal experiences, tailor their job searches to align with their core values and engage in networking through events and social media to gain job referrals and industry insights.

Having worked with Design Thinking for fifteen years, I firmly believe that this methodology can also be applied in coaching. It emphasizes a human centered approach, encourages iterative cycles of exploration and adheres to the principles of continuous learning, making it ideal for guiding individuals on their career journeys.

This coaching model is inspired by the methodology of “Desing Your Life” (Burnett & Evans, 2017) and uses elements of the IKIGAI (Garcia & Miralles, 2017) methodology.

Objective

This coaching model has the goal to support young graduates in their quest for a career that aligns with their true selves and adds meaning to their lives. The model has been designed to go deeply into their personalities, strengths, values. As a result, each graduate will gain a profound understanding of what they can contribute to the world, identify new job opportunities, and explore strategies for pursuing these paths.

The coaching will happen in three separate phases. For each of the phases I will be describing the methodology and questions used.

The 3 phases

1. **Identifying the authentic self:** In this phase the client will be reflecting on strengths, values, personal traits, personal & professional experiences, education and passions.
2. **Discovering new job opportunities:** In this phase the client will identify job opportunities that fit to his authentic self. These could be several opportunities. Each of them based on different strengths, experiences and personal traits of the client.
3. **Exploring and acting on opportunities:** Define actions to explore the opportunities and identify the fit.

The three phases in Detail

Phase 1: Identifying the authentic self

Objective

The aim of this phase is to work collaboratively with the client to enhance their self-awareness regarding their unique qualities and contributions to the world. This exploration focuses on their passions, strengths, values, education, personality, and both professional and personal experiences.

It is important to emphasize that reflecting on personality and personal experiences play a major role in this phase. In the professional realm, there is often a strong emphasis on hard skills, educational credentials, and technical expertise, which can overshadow the importance of soft skills, personality traits, and personal experiences. However, these aspects are crucial, as individuals present their whole selves during interviews and in the workplace, rather than just a portion of their capabilities. Acknowledging and appreciating the full range of skills and attributes allows candidates to boost their confidence, engagement, and discover new job opportunities. At the same time organizations are also increasingly recognizing that hiring authentic individuals can enhance job satisfaction and improve employee retention.

Methodology and Questions

During this phase, the client will engage in a thorough reflection on their entire self, encompassing their strengths, values, passions, education and training, as well as personal and professional experiences. As a first step, the coach will encourage the client to prepare by gathering relevant materials for the session (refer to the list of materials below). The coach will work closely with the client, actively listening to their insights, capturing key information on sticky notes, and visualizing it. Following this, the coach will collaborate with the client to cluster, prioritize, and analyze the gathered information.

Questions:

The main questions that will be answered are (inspired by the IKIGAI principles):

- What are you good at?
- What do you love?
- What is important to you?
- What brings meaning to your life?

Material for preparation:

- Exercise: Good Time Journal (Burnett & Evans, 2017)
- Exercise: Feedback from friends, colleagues and family on question: “When would you ask for my help”
- Strength-based assessments (E.g.: Strengths Finder 2.0, Tom Rath, Gallup Press)

Phase 1: Discovering new job opportunities

Objective

Once the authentic self has been identified, the coach will begin collaborating with the client to explore potential job roles, industries, and companies that align with this authentic self. Through active listening and guidance, the coach will help the client uncover new job opportunities that resonate with the insights gained in phase one. The session will also draw inspiration from the materials the client gathered prior to our meeting. The expected outcome will be two to three new opportunities along with a clear understanding of what the client can contribute to the role.

Methodology and Questions:

The coach begins the session by encouraging the client to reflect on and summarize their key insights from phase one. Following this, they will review the client's homework together and identify how the job opportunities align with the client's authentic self. In this phase creativity plays a major role, as the coach collaborates with the client to generate and identify new opportunities.

Questions

- What did you learn about yourself until now?
- Considering your profile, what possible industries/ companies/ job roles could you see for yourself?
- What would be new opportunities, you haven't considered until now?
- Which of these opportunities make you excited?
- What makes this opportunity so attractive and exciting to you?
- What opportunities would you select to move forward?
- What hard and soft skills do you bring to these industries/ companies/ job roles?
- How would you present yourself for this opportunity?
- What are you bringing to this opportunity?

Material

- Job search based on strengths, values (through LinkedIn, chat GPT, or any other job searching tool).

Phase 3: Explore and act on new opportunities

Objective

Once the new job opportunities are identified and the client understands their contributions to each one, we move on to phase three. In this phase, the coach collaborates with the client to prepare for an exploration phase aimed at gathering more information about the jobs themselves. Questions to consider include: Does the job exist? Does it meet the client's expectations? What are the job requirements? The goal of this final phase is to work

together with the client to identify methods for gaining more insight into the job opportunities and evaluating the client's potential fit for them.

Any assumptions that arise during the coaching process will be examined, and strategies for exploring these will be identified. The outcome will be a clear plan and actionable steps to evaluate the job opportunities and assumptions, which may involve an iterative process.

Methodology & Questions:

The coach begins the session by asking the client to summarize the insights and learnings they have gained so far. Together, they identify any potential questions that arise regarding the new opportunities the client wishes to explore further. These questions and assumptions are gathered, organized into clusters, and prioritized. The coach then collaborates with the client to develop a strategy for further exploring these assumptions and questions.

The client will explore according to the strategy and return to the session with their discoveries. The coach will collaborate with the client to review these findings and interpret them. If any new questions or assumptions emerge, a new strategy and action plan for further exploration will be established.

Through this iterative learning process, the client will be able to refine their understanding of job opportunities more effectively and be better prepared for future applications and interviews.

Questions

- What have you been learning so far?
- Which opportunity would you like to prioritize for further exploration?
- What actions do you need to set to explore this opportunity?
- Who and what can help you to get more knowledge on this opportunity?
- What is the timeline?

References

Burnett, B., Evans, D., & Evans, D. J. (2017).

Designing your life: Build the Perfect Career, Step by Step

García, H., & Miralles, F. (2017).

Ikigai: The Japanese secret to a long and happy life. Random House.