

THE UNCONSCIOUS AT WORK

Parallel Process, Transference and Counter-Transference in Coaching & Supervision
(Unconscious Activity that Provides Data for Illumination)



*“An OLC Conversation to Behold the
Psychoanalytic Dimensions of Parallel Process,
Transference/Counter-Transference in the Coaching
& Supervisory Encounter”*

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THE UNCONSCIOUS AT WORK: Transference, Countertransference, and Parallel Process — Reading the Data of the Unconscious in Coaching and Coaching Supervision

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IMPORTANT NOTICE — SCOPE OF PRACTICE: This book examines psychological concepts that originated in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. It is written for professionally credentialed coaches and coaching supervisors. Nothing in this volume trains, licenses, authorizes, or qualifies the reader to practice psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, counseling, or any regulated mental-health discipline. The material is offered to help coaches recognize relational phenomena, remain within the coaching contract, work more cleanly, and refer more responsibly. See Session Six for a full treatment of the boundary and the cautions that govern it.

First Edition.

To Priscilla

who has watched me learn, over more than three decades, that the hardest person to see clearly is the one doing the looking.

And to the supervisees

who brought me a case they thought was about the client, and stayed in the room long enough to discover it was also about them.

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FRONT MATTER

Preface

Why a coach should care about a hundred and thirty years of clinical argument.

I did not come to this material through psychology. I came to it through failure — the ordinary, unremarkable, professional kind that does not make anyone cry and does not get reported to anybody, but which quietly wastes six months of a good client's life and leaves an experienced coach wondering what on earth just happened.

The client was a senior executive. Competent, articulate, well-defended in the way that competent and articulate people usually are. We had a strong contract, a clear goal, and what I would have described at the time as excellent rapport. And for six months, nothing moved. Not nothing *happened* — a great deal happened. We had rich conversations. He reported insight. I made what I still believe were technically sound interventions. My questions were open and my listening was active and if you had put a marker sheet in front of an assessor, I would have passed.

And nothing moved.

What I eventually discovered — not in the coaching, but in supervision, six months too late — was that I had been working very hard in that relationship to be a particular kind of person for that client. Specifically, I had been working to be the one professional in his life who did not need anything from him. I had not decided to do this. I had never once thought about it. But every session, for half a year, I had been shaping my questions so that he would never have to feel that I was disappointed in his progress — and in doing so I had made it structurally impossible for him to experience the one thing his system most needed to encounter, which was another human being who could tolerate his failure without being destroyed by it.

Where did that come from? Not from him. It came from a much older room, with much older furniture, in which a young man had learned that the way to remain safe around powerful men was to require nothing of them.

That is countertransference. And it had been sitting in the middle of my coaching for six months, in plain sight, generating data every single session — data I could not read because nobody had ever taught me the alphabet.

The Argument of This Book

This book makes one central claim, and everything in the eight sessions that follow is an elaboration of it:

THE CENTRAL CLAIM

The relational field between coach and client generates continuous, patterned, readable information about the client's system — and the coach's own inner experience is one of the instruments that reads it.

Transference, countertransference, and parallel process are the three names the clinical tradition has given to the three most reliable channels on that instrument. They are not pathologies to be eliminated. They are not the coach's private business to be managed in silence. They are *data* — and in supervision, they are frequently the *best* data in the room.

That claim has two immediate consequences, and they pull in opposite directions. Holding both of them at once is the discipline this book is trying to teach.

The first consequence is that coaches who cannot read this data are working with one hand tied behind their backs. They will mistake a client's transference for a genuine assessment of their skill. They will mistake their own countertransference for professional judgment. They will bring a case to supervision, describe it accurately, and be completely unable to say why the case has stalled — because the reason is not in the content of the case at all. It is in the room, in the body, in the peculiar heaviness that descends on the supervisor at minute forty of the session.

The second consequence is that coaches who read this data too enthusiastically become dangerous. A coach who has just discovered transference is a hazard to the public. Everything becomes a projection. Every client resistance becomes a father complex. The coaching contract, which the client actually signed and actually wants, quietly dissolves into an unlicensed depth analysis that the client did not ask for, did not consent to, and is not protected in. I have seen this. It is worse than ignorance, because ignorance is at least honest about what it does not know.

So this is a book with a governor on the engine. I am going to teach you a great deal about three concepts drawn from psychoanalysis, and then I am going to spend an entire session — Session Six — telling you where to stop. The governing rule appears there in full, but I will state it here at the front so that it colors everything you read:

GOVERNING RULE

The Rule of the Threshold. In coaching, you may use what you notice. You may not go and get more.

You may notice that a client relates to you as though you were an authority who will punish him. You may use that noticing — carefully, sparingly, and in service of the client's stated agenda. You may not begin excavating the childhood origins of that pattern. The moment your curiosity moves from *what is happening between us right now, in service of the client's goal* toward *where did this come from in your history*, you have crossed from coaching into therapy, and you have done it without a license, without a contract, and without the containment that such work requires.

Why the History Matters

You may be tempted to skip Sessions Two, Three, and Four — the historical sessions on Freud, on Jung, and on the successors of both — and go straight to the applied material. I would ask you not to.

Here is why. These three concepts are not neutral technical terms with agreed definitions, like *blood pressure* or *tensile strength*. They are contested terms with a hundred and thirty years of argument behind them, and the argument is not over. When a coaching supervisor says *countertransference*, she may mean any one of at least four substantially different things — and which one she means depends entirely on which chapter of the history she inherited. If you do not know the history, you will not know which meaning is in play, and you will nod along in agreement with people who are saying the opposite of what you think they are saying.

More importantly: the history is a record of a profession slowly discovering that its own reactions were not noise. That discovery took sixty years and cost a great deal of institutional pain. It is one of the genuinely great intellectual reversals of the twentieth century — the movement from *the analyst's feelings are a contamination to be eliminated* to *the analyst's feelings are the finest instrument available*. Coaching is currently at roughly the 1948 stage of that journey. Knowing how the journey went the first time is worth an hour of your reading.

The Eight-Session Architecture

This volume follows the same pedagogical architecture as *Resistance: The Gateway to Insight* — eight one-hour sessions, each self-contained, each ending in exercise, inventory, and bibliography, and each building toward an integrated practice rather than a collection of techniques. The sessions may be worked alone, in a dyad, in a peer supervision group, or as the spine of a formal supervision training program.

Session	Focus	Center of Gravity
One	Foundations — the unconscious as data	Orientation and definition
Two	Freud and the discovery of transference	History — the first tradition
Three	Jung and analytical psychology as a system	History — the second tradition
Four	The progeny — how the successors built the modern concepts	History — the inheritance
Five	Parallel process — origin, mechanism, and evidence	The third concept in full
Six	The three phenomena in the general coaching context	Application and cautions
Seven	Supervision — Mode Four: the coach's own process	The Seven-Eyed Model, Eye Four
Eight	Supervision — Mode Six: the supervisor's own process	The Seven-Eyed Model, Eye Six

Nine appendices follow, and together they are close to half the book.

Appendix A is a full-length treatment — essentially a ninth session — of how transference, countertransference, and parallel process show up in, distort, and are assessed by the ICF ACC, PCC, and MCC markers, worked through marker by marker. **Appendix B** collects every inventory and exercise into a single reproducible working set, with a twelve-month program for using them. **Appendix C** is a glossary for readers coming to this vocabulary for the first time, followed by the consolidated master bibliography. **Appendix D** presents twelve worked cases — with the intervention, and with what went wrong. **Appendix E** is for trainers: program designs, facilitation notes, and the things that fail when this material is taught. **Appendix F** answers the questions and objections that come up whenever it is. **Appendix G** is a working reference to all seven modes of the Seven-Eyed Model, drawn from and extending my *The Coaching Super-Vision Journey*. **Appendix H** gives an annotated chronology of the whole field and a staged reading path for going further. **Appendix I** reduces the operational core of the book to twelve reference cards, followed by a concept index. **Appendix J** supplies the document set the whole method depends on \u2014 model coaching-agreement clauses, a full supervision agreement, disclosure sentence stems, the referral conversation and letter, a session record designed for this material, and a one-page ethical checklist.

A Word About the Reader I Am Imagining

I have written for a coach with no background in psychology whatsoever. If you have never read a page of Freud and could not distinguish Melanie Klein from Heinz Kohut, you are exactly who I had in mind. I define every term when it first appears. I explain the arguments before I take a side in them. I have tried never to use a piece of clinical vocabulary as though it were self-evident.

If you *do* have a clinical background, you will find places where I have simplified, and one or two where you may think I have simplified too far. I accept the charge. My purpose is not to produce coaches who can pass a psychoanalytic qualifying exam. It is to produce coaches who can sit in a session, notice that something strange is happening in the room, and have a name for it, a way of thinking about it, and — crucially — a clear sense of where the edge of their competence lies.

That is a modest goal. It is also, I have come to believe, the difference between a competent coach and a masterful one.

Gary C. Patterson
San Antonio, Texas

FRONT MATTER

How to Use This Book

Eight hours, four ways.

Each of the eight sessions is designed to be worked in approximately sixty minutes of focused attention — though most readers will find the historical sessions (Two, Three, and Four) run longer, and Session Eight is deliberately slow. The sessions are cumulative. Session Seven assumes Session Five; Session Eight assumes Session Seven. Do not skip forward.

Four Modes of Use

1. Solo Study

Work one session per week. Read the body of the session in a single sitting. Then let it stand for two or three days before attempting the exercises — this material has a way of continuing to work on you after you have stopped reading it, and the exercises land differently when the reading has had time to settle. Keep a dedicated journal. You will be asked to return to earlier entries.

2. Dyadic Study

Two coaches, alternating roles. One reads and presents the session; the other interrogates it. Then swap for the exercises. The dyad is the single best format for the inventories in Sessions Six through Eight, because most of them require someone to reflect back what they are hearing in your voice — and your voice is precisely the instrument you cannot hear yourself.

3. Peer Supervision Group

Groups of four to seven. One session per month, ninety minutes: forty minutes of content discussion, forty minutes of live case work applying that session's frame, ten minutes of group process review. The group format is essential for Session Five — parallel process is very difficult to see in a dyad and almost impossible to see alone, but a group will see it within twenty minutes of starting to look.

4. Formal Supervision Training Curriculum

The eight sessions map cleanly onto a standard supervision-training module. In that use, Sessions One through Five are pre-work, Six is the bridge, and Seven and Eight are the core practicum — with Appendix A serving as the credentialing-alignment module. Trainers may reproduce the inventories in Appendix B for participant use under the permissions stated on the copyright page.

The Recurring Elements

Every session contains the following, in this order:

- **Session Opening** — the question this hour exists to answer.
- **The Body of the Session** — exposition, history, argument, and worked illustration.
- **Illustrative Cases** — composite vignettes. Every case in this book is a composite. No client, supervisee, or supervisor is identifiable, and identifying detail has been altered throughout.
- **The Cautions** — what this session’s material makes it tempting to do wrongly.
- **Practice Exercises** — structured work, usually requiring a partner or a journal.
- **Inventory** — a self-assessment instrument. These are not psychometric instruments and make no claim to validity or reliability; they are structured reflection tools.
- **Reflection Questions** — for journal or group.
- **Session Bibliography** — the sources behind that hour.

PLEASE READ

A note on the inventories. Nothing in this book is a diagnostic instrument. The inventories are structured mirrors. They will tell you where to look; they will not tell you what you will find, and they cannot tell you what it means. That second question is what supervision is for — which is, in a sense, the entire argument of this book.

Companion Volumes

This book stands alone but was written inside a body of work. Readers who want to go further in a particular direction will find these companions useful:

- *Resistance: The Gateway to Insight* — the volume this one is built to sit beside. Where the present book treats the relational field, *Resistance* treats the client’s protective architecture. Session Six of this book assumes familiarity with the competing-commitments material developed there, though it re-explains what it needs.
- *The Coaching Super-Vision Journey* — the full-length treatment of supervision as a discipline. Sessions Seven and Eight of this book are an expansion of one chapter of that volume; readers who want the surrounding architecture of supervision — contracting, the group formats, the developmental stages of the supervisor — should go there.
- *Coaching Damaged Emotions* — the treatment of the coach’s presence as the primary instrument, and of the boundary between coaching and therapy when the client arrives wounded. The “thereapist” construct and the thereness/awareness distinction developed in that volume are used throughout Sessions Six and Seven here.
- *Becoming You* — the Jungian individuation material in accessible form. Session Three of this book is the technical companion to that more personal volume.

- *The PCC Marker Flight Plan Model* materials — the competency-by-competency guides underlying Appendix A.

SESSION ONE

The Unconscious as Data

What is actually in the room besides the two of you.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: If neither the coach nor the client is aware of it, in what sense is it *there* — and in what sense can a professional responsibly work with it?

1.1 Beginning Where the Reader Is

Let me start with something you already know how to do, so that the unfamiliar material has somewhere to land.

You have walked into a room where two people had just finished arguing. Nobody told you. Nothing was said. The argument was over before you arrived and both parties were behaving with perfect courtesy. And you knew within four seconds.

How? You will say: body language, tone, micro-expression, the too-careful politeness. All true, and all of it describes the *channel* rather than the *reception*. The more interesting fact is what happened inside you. You did not consciously observe eleven discrete behavioral cues and reason your way to a conclusion. Something in you was altered by the room. You became slightly guarded. Your own voice went a little careful. And *then*, a beat later, you thought: they've been fighting.

The conclusion arrived after the alteration. You did not deduce the state of the room; you caught it, and then you named what you had caught.

That sequence — **first the alteration in me, then the recognition of what it is about** — is the fundamental sequence of everything in this book. Transference, countertransference, and parallel process are all, at bottom, elaborations of the human capacity you just exercised in that doorway. What the clinical tradition adds is not the capacity. It is the *discipline*: the practice of noticing the alteration on purpose, holding it long enough to examine, and asking a specific and rigorous question about where it came from.

1.2 What We Mean — and Do Not Mean — by "The Unconscious"

The word *unconscious* has accumulated a great deal of unhelpful baggage. Before we go further, let me strip it down.

For our purposes in this book, the unconscious means simply this: **mental activity that shapes behavior without being available to introspection at the moment it operates**. That is all. It is not a place. It is not a basement full of repressed monsters. It is not

necessarily sinister, and it is certainly not necessarily sexual. It is a description of the very ordinary fact that most of what your mind does, it does without telling you.

This is not a controversial claim. It is one of the most thoroughly established findings in modern cognitive science, arrived at by researchers who had no interest in Freud whatsoever and in many cases actively disliked him. Implicit memory, procedural learning, automaticity, priming, attachment schemas, the entire architecture of System One reasoning — all of this is unconscious mental activity in the sense defined above. The experimental literature of the last forty years has, if anything, made the case for unconscious process *stronger* than Freud himself could have made it, even as it has dismantled much of his specific machinery.

TWO DIFFERENT CLAIMS

It is worth separating two claims that are constantly confused:

Claim A: Much mental activity operates outside awareness and shapes behavior. — *Overwhelmingly established. Not in dispute anywhere.*

Claim B: That activity is organized in the specific way Freud described — id, ego, superego, repression of infantile sexual wishes, etc. — *Heavily disputed, substantially revised, and in its original form largely abandoned even within psychoanalysis.*

This book depends entirely on Claim A and not at all on Claim B. You can reject every metapsychological proposition Freud ever advanced and still find every practical tool in this volume fully operational.

I state this plainly because a certain kind of reader — often a theologically careful one, and I count myself among them — approaches this material with justified wariness. If the price of admission were swallowing Freudian metapsychology whole, I would not pay it either. It is not the price. What is being asked is far more modest: **that you accept that you are affected by people in ways you do not immediately notice, and that this effect carries information.**

An Aside for the Theologically Cautious Reader

Some readers of my other work will want to know how this sits alongside a conservative theological anthropology. Briefly: it sits comfortably, provided we are careful about categories.

Scripture assumes throughout that human beings do not have transparent access to their own hearts. *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?* (Jer. 17:9). *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts* (Ps. 139:23) is a request made necessary by the fact that the psalmist cannot perform the search himself. The Pauline description of the divided will in Romans 7 — doing the thing one does not wish to do — is a phenomenological report of motivation operating below the level of endorsed intention.

None of this makes Scripture a psychoanalytic text, and I am not making that argument. I am making the far smaller point that the biblical anthropology has never assumed self-transparency, and that a coach who works as though clients have complete access to their own motives is working against both the clinical evidence and the scriptural witness at once. What the clinical tradition supplies is not a new anthropology. It is a set of tools for noticing something the tradition already told us was there.

1.3 The Three Phenomena — First Definitions

Here are the three terms, defined at the level of a first approximation. Each will be substantially complicated over the next four sessions. That complication is not pedantry; the complications are where the professional value lies. But you need a place to stand first.

Transference

WORKING DEFINITION

Transference is the client's unconscious redirection onto the coach of feelings, expectations, and relational patterns that originally belonged to a significant other relationship — most often, though not exclusively, an early formative one.

The client is not relating to *you*. Or rather: the client is relating to you *and also* to someone else, through you, without knowing it. The evidence that transference is operating is usually a mismatch of scale — a response that is too big, too small, or too fast for what actually happened between you.

A client who becomes visibly anxious when you say *let's look at what didn't work last month* is not responding to those eleven words. Those eleven words do not contain enough threat to produce that response. He is responding to a category of event — *review by an authority* — that has, in his history, reliably preceded humiliation. You have been, for a moment, cast in a role.

Note carefully what transference is **not**. It is not a delusion; the client is not confused about who you are. It is not necessarily negative; the client who decides in week two that you are the wisest person she has ever met is in transference just as surely as the one who decides you are judging him. And it is not rare. It is not an exotic clinical event that happens in deep therapy. **It is a permanent feature of every helping relationship, running continuously, all the time, in every session you have ever conducted.** The only variable is whether you can see it.

Countertransference

WORKING DEFINITION

Countertransference is the coach's own unconscious response arising within the working relationship — comprising both (a) material originating in the coach's own history that has been activated, and (b) responses evoked in the coach by the client's way of relating, which carry information about the client's system.

That two-part definition is doing an enormous amount of work, and the entire history in Sessions Two through Four is essentially the story of how the field moved from part (a) to including part (b). For now, hold both halves.

Part (a) is the older meaning: my stuff, activated. I have a reaction to this client that belongs to my life, not to hers. This is a contaminant, and the remedy is self-knowledge, personal work, and supervision.

Part (b) is the revolutionary meaning: my reaction is a *response to something real in the field*, and it is telling me something about the client that the client cannot yet tell me. If I consistently feel useless with a particular client, and I do not habitually feel useless, that feeling may be the most accurate report available on what it is like to be in a relationship with this person — which may be exactly what her direct reports have been failing to articulate for three years.

The professional problem, of course, is that these two feel identical from the inside. Distinguishing them is not a skill you can develop alone. That is the argument for supervision, and we will make it properly in Session Seven.

Parallel Process

WORKING DEFINITION

Parallel process is the unconscious replication, in one relationship, of the dynamics of another related relationship — classically, the reproduction within the supervision relationship of the dynamic operating between coach and client.

This is the strangest of the three and the one coaches find hardest to believe until they have seen it. The claim is that a dynamic can *travel* — that the way a client is with her coach can, without anyone intending it or noticing it, become the way that coach is with her supervisor.

The classic form: a supervisee brings a case about a client who will not commit to action. She describes the case competently. And then, in the supervision session itself, she declines every intervention the supervisor offers, agrees with everything, and leaves without committing to anything. The supervisor ends the hour feeling exactly the low-grade futility the coach has been feeling for six weeks. The dynamic has been transmitted, not described.

When the supervisor names it — *I notice that in the last forty minutes I have offered you four things and we have landed on none of them, and I wonder whether I have just met your client* — the case usually opens in about ninety seconds. That is why parallel process is worth an entire session of this book. When it is running, it is often the single most efficient route to the heart of a stuck case.

1.4 The Relationship Among the Three

New readers frequently ask whether these are three names for one thing. They are not, but they are intimately related, and it is worth being precise about how.

Think of them as three different *locations* of the same underlying phenomenon — unconscious relational patterning made visible in a professional relationship.

Phenomenon	Originates in	Lands in	Primary diagnostic value
Transference	The client's relational history	The client's experience of the coach	Reveals the client's expectations of relationship
Countertransference	The coach — either their history or their response to the client	The coach's inner experience	Reveals the coach's material AND the pull of the client's system
Parallel process	The coach–client dyad	The supervision relationship (or the reverse)	Reveals the dynamic that cannot be described in words

And here is the sequence that connects them, which you should commit to memory because it is the spine of Sessions Seven and Eight:

1. The client relates to the coach out of an old pattern. **(Transference.)**
2. The coach is affected by that — pulled into a complementary position, or stirred in her own material, or both. **(Countertransference.)**
3. The coach, unable to metabolize the pull, unconsciously enacts some portion of it in supervision. **(Parallel process.)**
4. The supervisor is affected by *that*. **(The supervisor's countertransference — Eye Six.)**
5. The supervisor names it, and the chain becomes visible from the top down.

That five-step chain is the transmission line. Every clinical concept in this book is a station on it.

1.5 Why This Belongs in Coaching — The Honest Case

There is a legitimate objection here and it deserves a serious answer rather than a dismissal.

The objection: These are psychoanalytic concepts. They were developed in a treatment modality that is longer, deeper, more frequent, more regressive, and differently contracted than coaching. Coaching is a forward-focused, goal-oriented, non-clinical partnership with a competent adult. Importing depth-psychological concepts into it is a category error at best and scope-of-practice violation at worst.

I take this seriously. Here is why I think it is wrong — and, more precisely, where it is right.

Where the Objection Is Right

It is entirely right that coaching is not therapy and that the *treatment* of transference belongs to therapy. In analysis, the transference is deliberately cultivated, allowed to intensify, and then interpreted — that is the engine of the work. Nothing remotely like that belongs in coaching. If you are cultivating transference, you have left the reservation.

It is also right that these concepts carry a seductive glamour. There is a particular kind of coach — usually two or three years in, usually bright, usually reading widely — for whom depth-psychological vocabulary becomes a way of feeling more like a *real* professional. That coach is about to do damage, and the objection is a healthy antibody against them.

Where the Objection Is Wrong

It is wrong in assuming that the *phenomena* are the property of the *modality*. They are not. Transference is not something psychoanalysis invented and therefore owns. It is something psychoanalysis *noticed*, in a setting designed to make it maximally visible. But it occurs in every relationship where one person occupies a position of perceived authority, insight, or help in relation to another. It occurs in teaching. It occurs in medicine — emphatically. It occurs in pastoral ministry, where I first encountered it without a name for it. It occurs in line management. And it occurs, continuously and unavoidably, in coaching.

The choice available to a coach is not *whether to have transference in the room*. It is whether to be able to see it. A coach who has decided that transference is outside her scope has not thereby excluded it from her sessions. She has only excluded it from her awareness — which is the one arrangement guaranteed to let it operate unchecked.

“The analyst’s own unconscious is the instrument by which he perceives the unconscious of the patient. But an instrument which is not itself calibrated will report its own distortions as findings.”

— A summary of the argument running from Freud (1912) through Heimann (1950)

And here is the strongest form of the case, which is about competence rather than depth. Consider what an ICF assessor is actually listening for at the MCC level. Partnership rather than direction. The coach’s agenda held lightly or not at all. Working with the *whole person* rather than the presenting content. Noticing and naming what is occurring in the moment between coach and client. Trusting the client’s process rather than rescuing it.

Every one of those is, in practice, a description of a coach who is managing transference and countertransference well — whether or not she has the vocabulary for it. The coach who cannot resist rescuing is in countertransference. The coach whose agenda keeps creeping in is in countertransference. The coach who cannot name what is happening in the room is failing to read the transference. **The markers are, in significant measure, a behavioral specification of relational-field discipline.** This is developed at length in Appendix A, and it is the reason that appendix exists.

1.6 The Instrument Problem

Everything in this book rests on a claim that ought to make you slightly uncomfortable: that the coach's own subjective experience constitutes usable professional data.

It ought to make you uncomfortable because subjective experience is notoriously unreliable. We confabulate. We rationalize. We attribute our moods to whatever is nearest. If I feel irritated in a session, the most likely explanation is not a subtle transmission from my client's unconscious. The most likely explanation is that I slept badly, or the previous session ran over, or I am hungry.

This is the **instrument problem**, and it is the central methodological difficulty of the entire field. An instrument that generates its own noise cannot distinguish signal from noise by itself.

There are four disciplines that partially solve it, and I want to name them here because they recur throughout the book:

Discipline One: Baseline Knowledge

You must know your own ordinary range. What do you *usually* feel at minute twenty of a session? What kinds of client normally bore you, and which normally energize you? Where does your attention normally wander? A coach who does not know her own baseline cannot detect a deviation from it — and the deviation is the entire signal.

This is why the first inventory in this book is a baseline inventory, and why I ask you to complete it before you do anything else.

Discipline Two: The Uncharacteristic Test

The single most useful heuristic in the whole field, and simple enough to hold in the middle of a session:

THE UNCHARACTERISTIC TEST

Is this response characteristic of me, or characteristic of me with this client?

If you feel mildly impatient with a slow-moving client and you are a person who feels mildly impatient with slow-moving people, that is your baseline and it tells you little. If you feel a flare of contemptuous impatience with one particular client, and contempt is not in your ordinary repertoire, *that* is signal. Something is happening.

Discipline Three: Convergence

A single data point from a single instrument is worthless. Convergence across independent sources is worth a great deal. If you feel de-skilled with a client, and your supervisor reports feeling de-skilled while listening to you describe the client, and the client's 360 feedback says her team feels incompetent around her — you now have three independent instruments reading the same value. That is no longer a mood. That is a finding.

Discipline Four: Holding It as Hypothesis

Nothing in this domain is ever a conclusion. Everything is a hypothesis to be held lightly, tested against subsequent data, and abandoned cheerfully when it fails to earn its keep. The coach who says *I felt sad, therefore my client is carrying unexpressed grief* has committed a serious professional error. The coach who says *I felt an unusual sadness in that session; I want to hold that and see whether anything else lines up with it* is working properly.

I will restate this rule in every remaining session, because it is the one that gets forgotten first.

1.7 What This Book Will Not Do

Some boundaries, set now rather than later.

- **It will not teach you to interpret transference to clients.** Interpretation — telling a client what his reaction to you means and where it comes from — is a therapeutic technique requiring training, containment, and a contract this book cannot give you. We will discuss *naming what is present in the room*, which is different and is squarely within coaching, and we will spend real time on the distinction.
- **It will not teach you to work with trauma.** Where transference reflects traumatic material — and sometimes it does, unmistakably — the professional response is referral, executed well. Session Six covers how.
- **It will not make you a psychodynamic coach.** There is such a thing, it is a legitimate specialization, and it requires far more training than eight sessions. This book is designed to make ordinary coaches more perceptive within their existing scope, not to move the scope.
- **It will not give you certainty.** If you finish this book more confident about what is going on inside your clients, I have failed. The correct outcome is that you finish it *more curious and less certain*, with better questions and a sharper sense of what you cannot know.

1.8 A First Case — All Three at Once

Before the exercises, one worked illustration. I will return to this case in Sessions Six, Seven, and Eight, examining it through progressively finer lenses. Read it now simply as a story.

ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

CASE: "Marcus and the Vanishing Agenda" (*composite*)

Marcus is a coach with about four years of practice, working toward PCC. His client, Dana, is a newly promoted division head in a manufacturing firm — highly capable, widely respected, and, by her own account, “drowning.”

The coaching contract is clear: build a delegation practice, stop absorbing work that belongs to her directs. Dana engages well. She is warm, funny, insightful about her own patterns. Marcus enjoys the sessions enormously.

By session seven, nothing has changed. Dana has not delegated a single thing. Each session, she arrives with a fresh and genuinely interesting problem — a difficult stakeholder, a reorganization rumor, a conflict between two managers — and each session, they work it well. Marcus leaves feeling that good work has been done. The delegation agenda has not been mentioned in four weeks and neither of them has noticed.

In session eight, Marcus does notice, and raises it. Dana is immediately, disarmingly apologetic: “Oh, you’re completely right, I’ve been derailing us, I’m so sorry, you must be frustrated with me.” Marcus hears himself say, warmly and instantly, “Not at all — this has been valuable work.”

The agenda vanishes again for two more sessions.

Marcus brings the case to supervision. He presents it clearly and articulately. He has prepared. The supervisor offers a possible frame; Marcus says “that’s really helpful” and moves on. The supervisor offers a second; Marcus says “yes, absolutely, I can see that” and offers a fresh and genuinely interesting complication. Forty minutes in, the supervisor notices that she has offered four things, that Marcus has warmly received all four, and that they have landed on nothing. She also notices that she likes Marcus very much and is oddly reluctant to press him.

Read that case again with the five-step chain in hand.

Transference: Dana relates to Marcus as an authority who must be kept pleased and never disappointed. Her apology in session eight — *you must be frustrated with me* — is not about Marcus. It is a move in a much older game. Note that it is a *positive* transference: she is not hostile, she is charming, and that is precisely what makes it invisible.

Countertransference: Marcus’s instant *not at all* is the tell. It is too fast. He has been recruited into the complementary role — the authority who is never disappointed — and he took the position without noticing he was being offered it. Is this Marcus’s own material, or is it the pull of Dana’s system? Almost certainly both, which is the usual answer, and which is why he cannot sort it out alone.

Parallel process: In supervision, Marcus does to his supervisor exactly what Dana does to him — warm reception, no commitment, interesting new material. And the supervisor is *recruited in the same way Marcus was*: she likes him, she does not want to press. The dynamic has traveled two links up the chain, arriving intact.

Notice what the supervisor now possesses. She has not been *told* what is wrong with the case; Marcus cannot tell her, because he cannot see it. She has been *given* it. Her own experience in the last forty minutes is a working model of the coaching relationship, running live in her office.

That is what this book means by *unconscious activity that provides data for illumination*. And that is the whole enterprise.

1.9 Cautions From Session One

Every session in this book ends with what its own material makes tempting. Here are the temptations of the first hour.

- **The temptation to see it everywhere.** Having read this session, you will go into your next coaching conversation and find transference in it. You will find it because you are looking for it, in the same way that a person who has just learned about a car model begins seeing that model on every road. Slow down. Most of what happens in a coaching session is what it appears to be.
- **The temptation to explain the client to yourself.** The single most damaging misuse of this material is the private formulation — the coach who develops a theory of the client's psychology and then coaches the theory rather than the person. If you find yourself with a compelling account of your client's inner architecture that you have never said aloud to anyone, that account is now a liability. Take it to supervision immediately.
- **The temptation to use the vocabulary with clients.** Do not say the word *transference* to a coaching client. There is almost no circumstance in which it helps and many in which it does harm — it pathologizes, it asserts expertise you have not contracted for, and it invites a conversation you are not equipped to hold. Everything useful can be said in plain language about what is happening between the two of you right now.
- **The temptation to skip the history.** You now have three working definitions and may feel equipped. You are not. Those definitions are approximately as adequate as *pressure in the pipes* is as a description of cardiology. The next three sessions are where the professional distinctions live.

1.10 Practice Exercises

Exercise 1.1 — The Doorway Log

Duration: seven days. Materials: journal.

For one week, in ordinary life rather than in coaching, log every instance in which you were affected by a room, a person, or an interaction *before* you understood why. The grocery store. A meeting. A phone call. Note three things and nothing more:

6. What changed in me? (Physical sensation, mood shift, impulse.)
7. How long before I could name what it was about?
8. Was I right?

The purpose is not insight. It is calibration — you are establishing how your particular instrument behaves before you attempt to read anything with it. Most coaches discover they have a characteristic *lag*, and a characteristic *first channel* (body, mood, or impulse). Both are worth knowing.

Exercise 1.2 — The Uncharacteristic Audit

Duration: 45 minutes. Materials: your current client list.

List every active client. Beside each, write one sentence describing how you characteristically *feel* in sessions with that person — not what you think of them professionally, but the emotional weather. Be blunt; nobody is reading this.

Then apply the Uncharacteristic Test to each. Where the feeling is one you routinely have with many people, mark it **B** for baseline. Where the feeling is unusual for you — stronger, or of a different kind, or one you find yourself slightly reluctant to have written down — mark it **S** for signal.

Take every **S** to supervision. Do not attempt to interpret them yourself. This is the exercise coaches most often do halfway; the interpretation is the part that requires another person.

Exercise 1.3 — The Reluctance Question

Duration: 20 minutes. Materials: journal.

One question, answered honestly and at length: **With which current client am I most reluctant to be recorded?**

Not *whose session would be least impressive* — that is a competence question. Which one would I least want a supervisor to hear, for reasons I would find hard to articulate? Write for twenty minutes without editing.

In my experience of running this exercise with several hundred coaches, the answer identifies a live countertransference roughly four times out of five.

1.11 Inventory 1 — Relational Baseline

This is not a psychometric instrument. It is a structured mirror. There is no score and no norm group. Its only purpose is to establish your ordinary range so that you can later detect a departure from it.

Rate each statement 1 (never true of me) to 5 (very often true of me). Then, more importantly, write one sentence of example beside each item you rated 4 or 5.

#	Statement	Rating (1–5)
1	I find it hard to end a session when the client is still distressed.	
2	I feel a small lift when a client tells me the coaching is helping.	
3	I notice myself working harder with clients who seem to doubt me.	
4	There are client types I quietly hope not to be assigned.	
5	I am more directive when I feel the session is going nowhere.	

#	Statement	Rating (1–5)
6	I feel responsible for whether the client achieves the goal.	
7	I find silence with certain clients uncomfortable and fill it.	
8	I have clients I look forward to and clients I brace for.	
9	I sometimes leave a session unable to remember what we did.	
10	I am reluctant to challenge clients who are senior to me in status.	
11	I feel de-skilled with at least one current client.	
12	I have caught myself wanting a client to like me more than I wanted them to change.	
13	I disclose more about myself with some clients than others.	
14	I have thought about a client between sessions more than the work warranted.	
15	When a client cancels, my relief is sometimes stronger than my disappointment.	

Working With Your Responses

Do not total the numbers; there is nothing to total. Instead:

- **Circle every item rated 4 or 5.** These describe your ordinary relational weather. They are not faults. They are your baseline, and knowing them is a professional asset.
- **Look at the items you hesitated over.** Hesitation is more informative than the rating. Which items did you want to qualify before answering? Write down what the qualification would have been.
- **Look at items 4, 11, 12, and 15 specifically.** These four are the ones coaches most often under-rate, because rating them honestly feels like an admission. If you rated all four at 1 or 2, sit with that for a moment before accepting it.
- **Date this inventory and keep it.** You will be asked to return to it at the end of Session Six and again at the end of Session Eight. The change between administrations is more interesting than any single administration.

1.12 Reflection Questions

9. Before reading this session, what did you believe about the role of your own feelings in a coaching session? Where did that belief come from — training, a specific teacher, a bad experience?
10. Describe a coaching relationship in which you were, in retrospect, being related to as somebody other than yourself. What was the role? What was the evidence?

11. The Rule of the Threshold says: you may use what you notice, but you may not go and get more. Where in your practice is that boundary least clear to you?
12. What is your characteristic first channel — body, mood, or impulse? What is the practical consequence of that for how you should conduct supervision?
13. If a supervisor said to you, “I think I have just met your client,” what would your first internal reaction be? What would that reaction tell you?

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SESSION TWO

Freud and the Discovery of Transference

How an accident in a Vienna consulting room became the central concept of a profession.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: Where did these ideas actually come from, what did their originator mean by them, and — crucially — what did he get wrong that we are still living with?

2.1 Why Start With Freud at All

A reasonable coach might ask why a working professional in 2020s executive coaching should spend an hour on a Viennese neurologist who died in 1939, whose central theories about infantile sexuality have been substantially abandoned, and whose treatment method is practiced today by a tiny and shrinking number of clinicians.

Three reasons, and they are good ones.

First, because he is the source of the vocabulary you are going to use. *Übertragung* — transference — and *Gegenübertragung* — countertransference — are his words. Every subsequent development in these concepts, including the developments that repudiate him, is a commentary on his text. You cannot follow the argument if you have not read the opening statement.

Second, because his errors are structural and are still being made. Freud got countertransference badly wrong, and the specific way he got it wrong — treating the practitioner's emotional response as a contaminant to be eliminated rather than an instrument to be calibrated — is precisely the error the coaching profession is currently making. When we look at Freud's blind spot we are looking into a mirror. That is worth an hour of anyone's time.

Third, because the phenomenon he described is real and he described it superbly. Strip away the metapsychology, the drive theory, the archaeology of infantile wishes, and what remains in the 1912 and 1914 papers is a set of clinical observations about how human beings behave toward those who help them. Those observations have held up remarkably well. They will describe things you have seen in your own coaching practice this month.

2.2 The Pre-History: Rapport, Magnetism, and the Problem That Would Not Go Away

Transference was not discovered by Freud. It was discovered, in a sense, by Franz Anton Mesmer's critics in 1784, and it took a hundred and fifteen years to acquire its proper name.

Mesmer and the Royal Commission of 1784

Mesmer (1734–1815) practiced what he called animal magnetism — a supposed universal fluid that could be manipulated to produce cures. His patients, mostly women, mostly of the Parisian upper classes, underwent dramatic “crises” in his consulting rooms, often producing genuine and durable symptom relief.

In 1784, Louis XVI convened a royal commission to investigate, including Benjamin Franklin, the chemist Lavoisier, and Dr. Guillotin. The commission conducted what were, in effect, the first controlled trials in the history of psychological medicine. They magnetized trees and had patients embrace them (crisis occurred). They had patients magnetized without their knowledge (nothing occurred). Their conclusion was that the magnetic fluid did not exist and the effects were produced by *imagination*.

What the commission actually demonstrated — and what the secret report to the king, unpublished for a century, made explicit — was that the cures were being produced by something in the *relationship* between magnetizer and patient. The secret report worried openly about the erotic dimension of that relationship and about the extraordinary power it conferred on the practitioner.

THE FIRST SIGHTING

The 1784 commission is the first documented professional encounter with the problem this book addresses: **a helping relationship generates powerful feeling in the person being helped, that feeling is not fully accounted for by the actual conduct of the helper, and it has enormous therapeutic and ethical consequence.**

Everything since — including the ICF Code of Ethics — is an attempt to manage what those commissioners noticed.

Puységur and "Rapport"

The Marquis de Puységur, a student of Mesmer, discovered in 1784 that magnetized subjects could enter a state of “magnetic somnambulism” — what we would call hypnotic trance — in which they were responsive to the magnetizer and to no one else. He named this exclusive responsiveness **rapport**.

The word has softened considerably on its way into modern coaching vocabulary. In Puységur’s usage it named something far stranger and more troubling: a state in which one person becomes selectively and profoundly responsive to another, for reasons neither can explain. When a coaching text tells you to “build rapport,” it is using, in a domesticated form, a word that originally described a phenomenon its discoverers found frankly alarming.

Charcot, Bernheim, and the Suggestion Debate

By the 1880s, hypnotism had been rehabilitated into respectable medicine, primarily through Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière in Paris, where the young Freud studied in 1885–86.

Charcot held that hypnotic susceptibility was a sign of hysterical pathology. His rival Hippolyte Bernheim of the Nancy school held that hypnotic phenomena were simply *suggestion* and that suggestibility was a normal human trait.

Bernheim won that argument, and his victory set up the problem Freud would inherit. If cure by suggestion is real, then the practitioner's influence over the patient is doing the work — and that influence is not a scientific instrument but a personal relationship. Bernheim's colleague Pierre Janet went further, describing what he called *somnambulist passion* — the intense attachment hypnotic patients developed toward their physicians, which Janet noted appeared regardless of the physician's personal qualities and which he considered a serious clinical nuisance.

So: by 1890, the phenomenon had been observed for a century, named twice, and universally regarded as an embarrassing side effect to be minimized. Freud's contribution was to look at the embarrassing side effect and decide it was the main event.

2.3 Anna O. and the Untoward Event

The founding story of the field, and it is worth telling carefully because the version most people know is wrong in instructive ways.

Bertha Pappenheim — “Anna O.” — was treated by Freud's older colleague Josef Breuer between 1880 and 1882 for a complex hysterical illness that emerged during her father's terminal illness. Breuer visited her daily, sometimes twice daily, for approximately eighteen months. She named the method they developed together: the *talking cure*, and, in a phrase that ought to be engraved over the door of every coaching room, *chimney-sweeping*.

The published account in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) ends with the treatment concluding successfully. It did not. Breuer terminated abruptly, and — according to Freud's later accounts, given to Stefan Zweig and to Ernest Jones — was called back the same evening to find his patient in the throes of a hysterical childbirth, announcing that Dr. Breuer's baby was coming. Breuer, badly shaken, calmed her, fled the house, and left for Venice with his wife the following day.

Historians have contested the details of this story vigorously, and the evidence for the hysterical pregnancy specifically is thin — it comes to us through Freud, decades later, with obvious polemical purpose. What is not contested is the shape of what happened: **an intense affective attachment developed in the treatment, Breuer was frightened by it, and he ended the work rather than understand it.**

Freud's interpretation, offered years later, was twofold and both halves matter:

14. The patient's passionate attachment was **not about Breuer**. It was a reproduction, in the treatment, of something belonging to her history. This is the birth of the transference concept.

15. Breuer's flight was a failure of nerve produced by *his own* unexamined response. Freud wrote to Zweig that Breuer "held in his hand the key" and "dropped it." This is, though Freud did not develop it, the birth of the countertransference concept.

FOR THE COACH

The lesson coaches should take from Anna O.

Breuer was not a bad clinician. He was a distinguished physician, a genuinely kind man, and by all accounts an excellent listener. He failed because he encountered a relational phenomenon he had no framework for, experienced it as a personal and professional threat, and made it stop.

Coaches do exactly this. Not with hysterical pregnancies — with the client who becomes too attached, or too admiring, or too angry, or too dependent. The coach experiences it as a boundary problem, manages it as a boundary problem, and never asks the interesting question: *what is this, what does it mean, and what is it telling me about the person I am working with?*

The Breuer solution is not wrong so much as it is *premature*. Ending is sometimes correct. Ending because you have no framework is a competence deficit disguised as an ethical stance.

2.4 Dora: The First Transference Analysis and Its Instructive Failure

Ida Bauer — "Dora" — was eighteen when her father brought her to Freud in October 1900. She was in treatment for eleven weeks. On the last day of December she terminated, giving Freud two weeks' notice "like a governess," as he noted with evident sting.

The case is worth a coach's attention for three reasons.

First: The Situation

Dora's father was having an affair with a family friend, Frau K. Frau K.'s husband, Herr K., had made sexual advances to Dora since she was fourteen. When Dora reported these to her father, he and Herr K. jointly maintained she had imagined them. She was, in effect, being traded — her acquiescence to Herr K. was the price of her father's access to Frau K.

Freud understood this social situation with complete clarity. He wrote it down. And then he pursued the line that Dora's symptoms represented her own repressed desire for Herr K., and that her disgust at his advances was a hysterical reversal of arousal.

Second: The Discovery, Made Too Late

In the postscript, written after the fact, Freud produced one of the most important paragraphs he ever wrote. He acknowledged that he had failed to master the transference in time: that Dora had transferred onto him her rage at the men who had betrayed her, that she had acted out that rage by terminating — doing to him what had been done to her — and that he had not seen it while it was happening.

This is the moment transference stops being a nuisance and becomes a technique. Freud concluded that transference is not an obstacle to the work; **it is the work**, because it brings the pathogenic pattern into the room where it can be observed live rather than merely reported.

Third: The Countertransference He Never Saw

Freud analyzed his failure with Dora as a failure of *technique* — he had not interpreted the transference in time. Later readers, beginning seriously with Erik Erikson in 1962 and continuing through several decades of feminist critique, have argued that the failure was elsewhere and deeper.

Freud was a forty-four-year-old man, of the same class and generation as Dora's father and Herr K., who found Herr K. "prepossessing" and considered his advances to a fourteen-year-old girl comprehensible. His interpretive line — *you actually wanted it* — aligned precisely with the position of the men who had gaslit her. He was, without any awareness whatever, occupying the countertransference position her family system required.

THE DORA WARNING

The teaching case. Dora is the single best illustration in the literature of an error coaches make constantly: **the practitioner's formulation is itself an artifact of the countertransference.**

Freud did not notice that he found Dora irritating, that he was allied with her father, or that his theory conveniently relieved the adult men of responsibility. He experienced all of this as *clinical reasoning*.

When you develop a compelling theory about your client, ask this: *whose position in the client's system does my theory serve?* If your formulation about a difficult executive happens to align exactly with the view held by the person who hired you, you have not necessarily reasoned well. You may have been recruited.

2.5 The Technical Papers: Freud's Mature Statement on Transference

Between 1911 and 1915 Freud published a series of papers on technique that remain the foundational statement. Three concern us.

"The Dynamics of Transference" (1912)

The core argument, stated in language a coach can use:

- Every person develops, through experience, a characteristic template for conducting erotic and dependent relationships — what Freud called a *stereotype plate* or cliché.
- This template is applied, largely automatically, to each new significant relationship.
- Only part of the template is conscious and available for adjustment. The rest is applied without inspection.

- In a treatment relationship, the template is applied to the practitioner — not because the practitioner has done anything, but because that is what templates do.

Freud then distinguished **positive** from **negative** transference — affectionate versus hostile — and made an observation that is easy to skim and should not be: positive transference is *harder to work with*, not easier, because it is experienced by both parties as simply the relationship going well.

Read that again with a coaching practice in mind. The client who thinks you are wonderful, who quotes you to colleagues, who says every session is transformative — that client is, from a transference standpoint, in a more complicated position than the one who tells you flatly that the coaching is not working. And you are far less likely to examine it, because it feels like competence.

"Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through" (1914)

This paper contributes the single most useful sentence in the entire corpus for a coach, though Freud did not phrase it as a slogan:

"The patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it."

— Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through," 1914

What cannot be remembered is repeated. What cannot be spoken is enacted. This is the mechanism underlying everything in this book — including, when we get to Session Five, parallel process, which is nothing other than this principle operating across a relational chain rather than within a single dyad.

For coaching, the practical implication is immediate. A client who cannot articulate what is wrong will *show* you. The showing is not a failure of the coaching conversation. It is the most reliable communication available. Your job is not to extract a better verbal account. It is to notice what is being enacted — including, and especially, what is being enacted *with you*.

"Observations on Transference-Love" (1915)

Freud's treatment of the patient who falls in love with the analyst, and the paper in which his ethical seriousness shows to best advantage. Three points:

16. The love is genuine — not a counterfeit emotion. It is real feeling, in a real person, produced by the situation.
17. It is nonetheless *not about the analyst as a person*, and any analyst who believes it is has lost his footing.
18. It must be neither gratified nor rejected but *understood* — a third position that Freud correctly identified as extraordinarily difficult to hold.

That third position is the one coaching most needs and least teaches. When a client's response to you is disproportionate — in admiration, in dependence, in hostility — the two easy moves are to accept it at face value or to shut it down. Both are failures. The professional move is to receive it without accepting the role it assigns you, and to remain curious about it.

2.6 Countertransference: Freud's Great Blind Spot

Here is a fact worth pausing on. Across roughly twenty-four volumes of collected works, Freud discusses countertransference in substance perhaps four times, and never devotes a paper to it.

The 1910 Introduction of the Term

The word *Gegenübertragung* first appears in "The Future Prospects of Psycho-Analytic Therapy," delivered at the Nuremberg Congress in 1910. Freud states that countertransference arises in the physician as a result of the patient's influence on his unconscious feelings, that no analyst goes further than his own complexes permit, and that a self-analysis is therefore required.

Note the framing precisely, because everything hinges on it. Countertransference is:

- An **obstacle** — a limit on how far the analyst can go;
- Located in the analyst's **own complexes** — his personal pathology;
- To be **overcome** — the remedy is more self-analysis;
- A source of professional **shame** — evidence of insufficient analysis.

That framing dominated the field for forty years. It also, incidentally, dominates coaching today — which is why coaches so rarely bring their reactions to supervision without apologizing for them.

The Surgeon and the Mirror (1912)

In "Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis," Freud offers the two metaphors that would define analytic technique and are still doing damage:

The **surgeon**: the analyst should model himself on the surgeon who puts aside all feeling, including human sympathy, and concentrates on performing the operation skillfully.

The **mirror**: the analyst should be opaque to the patient, reflecting nothing but what is shown to him.

These are counsels of emotional neutrality, and they have been criticized for a century — partly unfairly, since Freud in practice was a warm, chatty, and self-disclosing clinician who fed his patients and lent them money. The metaphors describe an aspiration, not his behavior. But the aspiration was influential, and it built a professional culture in which the practitioner's feeling was a defect.

The Telephone Receiver — The Seed Freud Did Not Plant

And yet, in the very same 1912 paper, five paragraphs from the surgeon metaphor, Freud writes something entirely different and far more radical. He says the analyst should turn his own unconscious like a receiving organ toward the transmitting unconscious of the patient — adjusting himself as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone, so that the receiver can reconstruct the sound waves from the electrical oscillations.

THE CENTRAL CONTRADICTION

Sit with the contradiction, because it is the hinge of the entire history.

Metaphor One (surgeon/mirror): the practitioner's inner life is a contaminant. Eliminate it.

Metaphor Two (telephone receiver): the practitioner's unconscious is a *receiving instrument* tuned to the client's unconscious. It is the primary means of perception.

These cannot both be true. If your unconscious is a receiver, then what it receives is data — and “eliminating” it means switching off the only sensor you have.

Freud never resolved this. He wrote both, five paragraphs apart, and pursued the first for the rest of his career. It took the field until 1950 to go back and pick up the second. **Session Four is the story of that recovery.**

1937: The Late Concession

In “Analysis Terminable and Interminable,” written two years before his death, Freud returns to the subject with unusual candor. He acknowledges that analysts are people, that their own defenses distort their work, that the demands of the profession are extraordinary, and — in a striking practical recommendation — that every analyst should return to analysis periodically, perhaps every five years, without shame.

That recommendation is the direct ancestor of mandatory ongoing supervision. It is the reason the European supervision tradition treats supervision as a career-long requirement rather than a credentialing hurdle, and it is the argument I would make to any coach who regards supervision as something one graduates from.

2.7 Freud's Own Countertransference Failures

A short and uncomfortable section, included because it is instructive rather than because it is scandalous.

Dora — already discussed. Freud sided, unconsciously, with the adult men.

Sabina Spielrein and Jung. Spielrein was Jung's patient at the Burghölzli beginning in 1904, then his student, then — by her own diaries and their correspondence — involved with him in a relationship that at minimum breached every boundary of the treatment. When the

situation became public, Freud initially wrote to Spielrein's mother in defense of Jung, then reversed. Both men handled it badly. Spielrein went on to become a significant analyst in her own right whose work anticipated the death-drive concept Freud later developed without adequate credit to her.

Ferenczi and Elma Palos. Sándor Ferenczi, Freud's closest collaborator, was analyzing both his lover Gizella Palos and her daughter Elma, and fell in love with Elma. He wrote to Freud about it constantly. Freud analyzed Elma himself for a period, then sent her back. The whole arrangement was a countertransference catastrophe conducted in full view of the field's founder, who managed it as a practical problem rather than a clinical phenomenon.

The point of recounting these is not to diminish Freud. It is this: **the man who invented the concept of countertransference could not see his own.** Not because he was foolish or dishonest, but because the entire architecture of his thinking located countertransference as a defect to be privately overcome rather than a phenomenon to be publicly examined. A concept framed as shameful cannot be brought into the open, and a phenomenon that cannot be brought into the open cannot be worked with.

That is the single most important professional lesson in this session, and it applies directly to coaching supervision. **The way we frame the coach's reactions determines whether they can be examined.** If a supervision culture treats the coach's feelings as evidence of insufficient development, coaches will not bring them, and the supervisor will be working blind on the richest data available. Session Seven is largely about how to build the opposite culture.

2.8 Parallel Process in Freud: Absent, but Anticipated

The term does not appear in Freud and the concept was not formulated until 1955. But two Freudian ideas are its necessary preconditions, and it is worth naming them so that Session Five does not appear to come from nowhere.

The telephone-receiver model establishes unconscious-to-unconscious communication as a real channel. Without that, parallel process is impossible — there is no mechanism by which a dynamic could travel.

The repetition compulsion — developed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) — establishes that unresolved material seeks re-enactment, persistently and across contexts. Parallel process is repetition compulsion crossing a relational boundary: the material that cannot be metabolized in the coaching dyad is re-enacted one level up.

Freud had both parts. He never put them together, largely because he had no supervisory structure to observe them in. Supervision as a formal institution did not exist in a developed form until the Berlin Institute's training model of the 1920s, and the tripartite structure that generates observable parallel process — patient, therapist, supervisor — was not standard until later still. **You cannot see parallel process without a supervision system.** The concept had to wait for the institution.

2.9 What a Coach Should Take From Freud

Six takeaways. I would ask you to write these somewhere you will see them again.

- 19. People bring templates.** Every client arrives with a pre-formed pattern for relating to a helping authority, and applies it to you within the first three sessions, largely without your participation.
- 20. Positive transference is the dangerous one.** The client who adores you is harder to see clearly than the one who resists you, because the adoration is indistinguishable from success.
- 21. What cannot be remembered is repeated.** When a client cannot say what is wrong, watch what is being done — including what is being done to you.
- 22. Receive without accepting the role.** The Freud of 1915 gives coaching its most useful ethical instruction: neither gratify nor reject, but understand.
- 23. Your formulation may be an artifact.** The Dora warning. Before you trust your analysis of a client, ask whose position in the client's system your analysis happens to serve.
- 24. The framing determines the visibility.** Freud framed countertransference as shameful, and therefore could not see his own. If you frame your reactions as failures, you will hide them, and you will hide them first of all from yourself.

2.10 Cautions From Session Two

- **Do not import the archaeology.** Freud's clinical observations are useful; his developmental theory is not your business. A coach who begins constructing accounts of a client's early childhood has left coaching entirely, and has done so on the basis of a theory the field itself has substantially revised.
- **Do not adopt the surgeon.** Some coaches will read the neutrality metaphors as vindication of a cool professional distance. They are not. They are the error, and Freud himself did not practice them.
- **Do not treat the transference as your material to interpret.** Freud interpreted the transference because he was conducting a treatment designed for it, with a patient who had contracted for it, four to six times a week, with his own analysis behind him. You have none of those conditions.
- **Do not let the history become a performance.** Nobody in your practice needs to know that you have read the 1912 papers. The knowledge should show up as better questions, not as vocabulary.

2.11 Practice Exercises

Exercise 2.1 — The Breuer Inventory

Duration: 30 minutes. Materials: journal.

Identify a coaching relationship you ended, or wanted to end, for reasons you found difficult to state precisely. Perhaps you cited fit, or scope, or the client's readiness. Now answer:

25. What was I feeling in the sessions before I decided to end?
26. What would I have had to be able to tolerate in order to continue?
27. Was the ending in the client's interest, in mine, or genuinely both — and how would I know?

Some endings are entirely correct. The purpose of the exercise is not to indict them but to distinguish the endings that were clinical judgments from the endings that were Breuer's carriage to Venice.

Exercise 2.2 — The Positive Transference Search

Duration: 30 minutes. Best done with a peer.

Identify your most appreciative current client — the one who most consistently tells you the coaching is valuable. Then work these questions with a partner who is instructed to press:

- What specifically does this client say about me, and how does it feel to hear?
- When did I last genuinely challenge this client?
- What has actually changed in this client's behavior or results — not in their reported experience of our sessions?
- If the appreciation stopped tomorrow, what would I feel?

The last question is the one that does the work. Coaches are frequently startled by their own answer.

Exercise 2.3 — The Dora Test

Duration: 20 minutes per case. Ongoing practice.

Take a current client about whom you hold a settled explanatory view — *he is conflict-avoidant, she has an authority problem, he over-functions because he doesn't trust his team*. Write the view down in one sentence. Then answer three questions:

28. Who else in the client's system holds this view?
29. Whose interests in that system does the view serve?
30. What would I have to notice in order to abandon it?

If the answer to (3) is *nothing I can imagine*, you are no longer holding a hypothesis. You are holding a conviction, and convictions about clients are countertransference in formal dress.

2.12 Inventory 2 — The Freudian Legacy Audit

Purpose: to surface the assumptions about your own emotional responses that you inherited without choosing them.

Mark each statement A (agree), D (disagree), or U (uncertain). Then — and this is the substance of the exercise — write, beside each, where you learned it.

#	Statement	A / D / U	Where I learned this
1	A strong emotional reaction to a client means I have not done enough of my own work.		
2	A good coach is essentially neutral in the session.		
3	If I am bored with a client, that is a problem with my attention.		
4	My feelings in session are private and not appropriate material for supervision.		
5	A client who admires me is evidence that the coaching is working.		
6	Bringing my reactions to supervision would suggest I am struggling.		
7	The professional response to a difficult dynamic is to manage the boundary.		
8	What happens between me and the client is separate from the client's wider system.		
9	If I cannot explain my reaction, it is probably not worth reporting.		
10	It is unprofessional to be personally affected by a client's material.		

Interpretation. Every one of these ten statements is a form of the 1912 surgeon metaphor. Every one of them, held firmly, will make you less perceptive and less safe. Agreement is not a defect — these ideas are ambient in coaching culture and most of us absorbed them without inspection. The valuable column is the fourth. Trace the inheritance. Then decide, deliberately, which of these you still wish to hold.

2.13 Reflection Questions

31. Freud wrote the surgeon metaphor and the telephone-receiver metaphor five paragraphs apart. Which one governs your practice, honestly?
32. Breuer had the key and dropped it. What key have you dropped, and what would you have needed in order to hold it?
33. The Dora case turns on Freud's inability to see whose side he was on. In your current caseload, is there a client where you may be on somebody's side without having chosen it?

34. Freud recommended that analysts return to analysis every five years. What is the coaching equivalent, and are you doing it?
35. What did you notice in yourself while reading section 2.7 — the account of Freud's failures? Discomfort? Satisfaction? Dismissal? What might that reaction be telling you about how you hold your own errors?

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SESSION THREE

Jung: A System of Psychological Insight

The second tradition — and the one that got countertransference right forty years early.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: What is analytical psychology as a whole system, and how do transference, countertransference, and parallel process look when they are placed inside it rather than inside Freud's?

3.1 Why Jung Requires His Own Session

It would be possible to treat Jung as a footnote to Freud — a dissenting student whose contributions can be listed in a paragraph. That is how he is usually handled in coaching literature, when he is handled at all, and it is a serious mistake.

Here is why. On the specific question this book addresses — what is the practitioner's own psyche doing in the room, and is it a problem or an instrument — **Jung arrived at the modern answer roughly forty years before mainstream psychoanalysis did.** The position that Paula Heimann announced to great controversy in 1950, and that took another two decades to become orthodoxy, Jung had stated plainly in the 1920s and elaborated at book length by 1946.

More than that: Jung offers something Freud does not, which is a coherent *system* — an account of the whole psyche within which these phenomena have a natural place rather than an embarrassing one. For a coach, that systemic quality matters enormously. Freud gives you a set of clinical warnings. Jung gives you a map.

I should state my own position. I am not a Jungian, I do not accept the whole system, and there are portions of the late work — the synchronicity material, the alchemical speculation at its most unrestrained — that I regard as unfalsifiable and therefore outside anything I would call knowledge. But I have found the core structures indispensable in thirty years of ministry, coaching, and supervision, and I have never found an adequate substitute for them. Take what serves. Leave the rest.

3.2 The Empirical Foundation: Complexes

Most people are surprised to learn that Jung began as an experimentalist, and that his first major contribution was a laboratory finding.

Between 1904 and 1907 at the Burghölzli hospital in Zürich, Jung ran the **Word Association Experiment**. The method was mundane: read a subject a list of a hundred stimulus words;

the subject responds with the first word that comes to mind; measure the reaction time with a stopwatch and record physiological responses.

What Jung found was that responses were not uniformly distributed. Certain words produced a cluster of disturbances: delayed reaction, unusual responses, repetition of the stimulus word, failure to respond, forgetting the response on later recall, physical restlessness, laughter, and measurable changes in skin conductance. These disturbances clustered around themes — and the subject was typically unaware of the pattern until it was pointed out.

THE EMPIRICAL CORE

Jung named the underlying structures **complexes**: emotionally charged clusters of images, memories, and associations organized around a core theme, operating autonomously and outside conscious control.

The finding is not speculative. It was measured, replicated, and it is the reason Freud sought Jung out — the Word Association Experiment provided the first laboratory evidence for unconscious mental process, and Freud knew exactly what he had been handed.

Jung's formulation is worth memorizing: *everyone knows nowadays that people "have complexes." What is not so well known is that complexes can have us.*

For coaching purposes, three properties of complexes matter, and I want you to hold them because they will recur through the rest of this book.

- 36. Complexes are autonomous.** They behave like sub-personalities. They are not thoughts you have; they are patterns that activate and, while active, occupy you. The client who becomes a different person the moment his boss is mentioned is not being dramatic. A complex has been constellated.
- 37. Complexes are constellated by trigger, not by will.** You cannot decide to activate or deactivate one. Something in the environment — a tone, a phrase, a relational configuration — fits the pattern, and the pattern comes online.
- 38. Complexes distort perception before they distort behavior.** By the time you notice the behavior, the perceptual world has already been reorganized. The client in the grip of an authority complex is not misbehaving toward a neutral authority; he is behaving quite reasonably toward the dangerous authority he is actually perceiving.

And now note the connection, which is the reason this section is here: **transference, in Jungian terms, is a complex constellated in the consulting room and projected onto the practitioner.** That is not a metaphor. It is a precise statement, and it is the most useful single definition of transference in this book.

3.3 The Structure of the Psyche

Jung's model has more moving parts than Freud's. Here they are, in the order a coach needs them.

The Personal and the Collective Unconscious

Jung accepted Freud's personal unconscious — repressed and forgotten material belonging to the individual's biography — and then proposed a deeper stratum he called the **collective unconscious**: inherited structural predispositions common to the species.

This is the most misunderstood idea in Jung and the one that most often causes serious readers to close the book. So let me be exact about the claim, because the careless version is indefensible and the careful version is not.

Jung did **not** claim that specific images are inherited. He repeatedly and explicitly denied this. What he claimed is that human beings inherit *predispositions to form certain kinds of images* — in the same way that a bird inherits not a nest but a nest-building tendency, or a human infant inherits not a language but a language-acquisition capacity. The archetype-as-such is a formal structure with no content. What we actually encounter is always the archetypal *image*, which is structure filled in with the material of a specific culture, family, and life.

Understood that way, the claim is considerably less exotic. It amounts to: human beings are a species with a shared evolutionary history and therefore share deep structural regularities in how they organize experience of parents, authority, danger, mating, mortality, and the sacred. Contemporary evolutionary and developmental psychology says something not enormously different in different vocabulary.

Ego

The center of consciousness. The "I" that says I. In Jung's system — and this is the crucial move — the ego is *not* the center of the psyche. It is the center of the small, illuminated portion of the psyche. This relativizing of the ego is the foundation of everything else.

Persona

From the Latin for the mask worn by an actor. The persona is the adapted face — the socially calibrated presentation through which we meet the world. It is not a lie and not a defect. It is necessary. A person with no persona is unbearable to work with.

The pathology is *identification*: mistaking the mask for the face. Jung considered this a characteristic disorder of successful people, which makes it a characteristic disorder of coaching clients. The executive who has become entirely the role, who no longer knows what he thinks apart from what the position requires him to think, who experiences a threat to the role as a threat to existence — that is persona identification, and it is sitting in your coaching chair regularly.

Shadow

Everything about oneself that has been excluded from the self-concept. Note carefully: **the shadow is not the evil part**. It is the *rejected* part, and what gets rejected depends entirely on what the persona had to become. In a person who built an identity on being reasonable, the

shadow contains rage. In a person who built an identity on toughness, the shadow contains tenderness and need. In a person who built an identity on humility, the shadow contains ambition — which, in my own experience of church and ministry contexts, is very nearly a universal finding.

The shadow's defining behavior is **projection**. Material that cannot be owned is perceived in others, where it can be safely deplored. The intensity of the disproportion is the diagnostic sign: when a client's contempt for a colleague is markedly larger than the colleague's offense, you are looking at a projection, and the content of the contempt is a fairly reliable inventory of what the client cannot own.

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."

— C. G. Jung

Anima and Animus

The contrasexual interior figure — the unconscious feminine in a man, the unconscious masculine in a woman. This is the portion of Jung's system that has aged least well, being built on essentialist assumptions about gender that few readers today will accept as stated.

What survives, and it is worth something, is the underlying structural observation: **whatever a person has excluded from their gendered self-concept operates autonomously and is projected onto others with extraordinary force**. The specifically erotic transferences and the specifically bitter cross-gender conflicts both draw on this. A coach need not accept the metaphysics to notice that a client's account of a colleague of the opposite sex is sometimes carrying a great deal more voltage than the colleague could plausibly generate.

The Self

The archetype of wholeness and the ordering center of the total psyche, conscious and unconscious together. The Self is both the totality and the organizing principle that draws development toward integration.

Christian readers will want to know how this relates to theological anthropology. Jung was explicit that he was speaking psychologically rather than metaphysically, and equally explicit that the Self and the image of God are, empirically, indistinguishable in the psyche — which is a claim about phenomenology and not about ontology. I regard the Self as a useful description of an *observed* pull toward integration and would decline the further theological freight some Jungians attach to it. That distinction can be made cleanly and the psychology remains usable.

Individuation

The lifelong process by which a person becomes the particular individual they are — differentiated from collective norms, from the persona, and from unconscious identification with others. Individuation is not self-improvement and it is not self-actualization in the

humanistic sense. It is closer to *becoming genuinely singular*, which is often uncomfortable and sometimes costly.

For coaching, individuation is the deepest available frame for the developmental question. The mid-career executive who has achieved everything specified and finds it hollow is not failing. He is at the threshold of the second half of life as Jung described it, in which the task shifts from *building the persona and mastering the world* to *recovering what was excluded in order to build it*. That is a coaching conversation of enormous value, and it is available without a single word of clinical vocabulary.

Psychological Types

Jung's 1921 typology — the attitudes of introversion and extraversion, and the four functions of thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition — is the portion of his work that reached the general public, in heavily modified form, through the Myers-Briggs instrument and its many descendants.

Its relevance here is narrow but real: **the inferior function** — the least developed of the four — is where a person is most primitive, most easily overwhelmed, and most likely to behave uncharacteristically. A thinking-dominant executive whose feeling function is inferior will not merely be *bad at* emotional situations; he will be *flooded* by them and will behave, briefly, like a much younger person. Recognizing this saves a coach from mistaking a functional weakness for a character flaw.

3.4 Jung on Transference

Jung called transference the *alpha and omega* of the analytic method, and also described it as a phenomenon he had come to dread. Both are characteristic.

Transference as Projection

In Jungian terms, transference is a species of projection: unconscious content — a complex, a shadow element, a parental image, an archetypal figure — is projected onto the practitioner, who is then perceived and related to as though he were the carrier of that content.

Two consequences follow, and they distinguish Jung sharply from Freud.

First, the content projected is not exclusively personal. Freud saw transference as the reproduction of childhood object relations. Jung agreed that this happens and added that it does not exhaust the phenomenon. Sometimes what is projected onto the practitioner is *archetypal* — the Wise Old Man, the Great Mother, the Healer, the Savior. This is a genuinely important distinction for coaches, because archetypal transference has a different quality: it is impersonal, numinous, and disproportionately powerful. The client who regards you with something approaching reverence is not relating to you and is not simply relating to his father. He has constellated an archetype and you are standing where it landed.

Second, the projection contains something the client needs to reclaim. Freud's transference is a repetition of the past. Jung's transference is that, plus a *prospective* dimension: what is projected onto the practitioner is frequently a capacity or value belonging to the client that has not yet been integrated. The client who sees profound wisdom in you is, in part, encountering an unlived wisdom of her own, deposited outside herself for safekeeping.

APPLICATION

Why the prospective view changes the coaching. If transference is only repetition, the practitioner's task is to interpret it away.

If transference also carries an unlived potential, then the practitioner's task is to hold the projection carefully, without believing it and without crushing it, until the client is able to take it back.

That second task is squarely within coaching. It requires no interpretation, no history-taking, and no clinical training. It requires only that you decline to become the person the client needs you to be, warmly and without humiliating them — and that you keep returning the question to where it belongs.

This is the single most practically valuable idea in this session.

Withdrawal of Projection

The Jungian therapeutic goal is not interpretation but **withdrawal of the projection** — the gradual, often reluctant process by which a person recognizes that what they have been seeing in another belongs to themselves.

This is developmental work of the first order, and it is uncomfortable. Taking back a positive projection means bearing one's own capacity, with its attendant responsibility. Taking back a negative projection means owning one's own shadow. Clients resist both, and the resistance is not obstinacy — it is the entirely reasonable reluctance of a person being asked to carry something heavy they had successfully set down.

For the coach: the moment of withdrawal often looks like a small deflation. The client says, with less energy than before, *I suppose I've been expecting you to tell me what to do*. Something has gone out of the room. That flatness is not a failure of the session. It is frequently the most important thing that has happened in the engagement, and the coach's job is to not rush to refill the space.

3.5 Jung on Countertransference: The Forty-Year Head Start

Now the material that justifies this session's place in the book.

The Chemical Reaction

Jung's most-quoted sentence on the subject, from *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933):

“The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”

— C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*

Set that beside Freud’s surgeon and mirror. They are not variations on a theme. They are opposite accounts of what a professional relationship is. Freud’s practitioner is an instrument that acts upon a subject; Jung’s practitioner is a participant in a reaction that changes both parties.

Jung went further, and the further statement is the one with teeth: **the practitioner is in the treatment as much as the patient, and is subject to the same requirement of transformation.** He instituted the requirement of a training analysis for this reason — not to certify the practitioner’s health, but because a practitioner who is not himself changeable cannot participate in a process of change.

Psychic Infection

Jung described what he called the practitioner’s susceptibility to *psychic infection* — the transmission of the patient’s unconscious state into the practitioner, who then experiences it as his own. He was emphatic that this is not weakness on the practitioner’s part but an inherent feature of genuine engagement, and that a practitioner immune to it would be useless.

He drew on the anthropologist Lévy-Bruhl’s term ***participation mystique*** to describe the state of unconscious identity that can arise between two people in intense relationship — a condition in which the boundary between whose feeling is whose becomes genuinely unclear.

Read those two paragraphs again and notice what has been described. This is **inductive countertransference** — the practitioner’s feeling induced by the patient’s unconscious state — which Heinrich Racker would formalize in the 1950s and which Melanie Klein’s school would theorize as projective identification. Jung had it in the 1930s, in plain language, as an ordinary feature of practice.

The Wounded Healer

Jung revived the mythological figure of the wounded healer — Chiron the centaur, teacher of physicians, himself carrying an incurable wound; and the incubation rites of Asklepios, in which healing came through the priest’s own affliction — as a description of the therapeutic relationship.

The claim: the practitioner’s capacity to help is a function of the practitioner’s own wounding. Not despite it. Because of it. It is the practitioner’s own experience of the territory that makes him able to accompany another through it.

Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig later gave this a sharp and necessary edge in *Power in the Helping Professions* (1971). His argument: the healer–patient relationship is an **archetypal dyad**, and

both poles are present in both people. When the practitioner identifies exclusively with the healer pole — *I am the well one, you are the wounded one* — the patient is left carrying the entire wounded pole, and the practitioner's own wound goes underground, where it emerges as the shadow of the helping professions: the will to power.

THE SHADOW OF HELPING

Guggenbühl-Craig's warning, translated for coaching.

The coach who has fully identified with competence, health, and having-it-together is not a safer coach. He is a more dangerous one, because his own woundedness has not disappeared — it has become invisible to him, and it will operate through the relationship as a need to be needed, a need to be right, or a need to produce a client who validates him.

In my other work I have called this the difference between a therapist and a "thereapist" — the one who applies a method, and the one whose presence is the method. What Guggenbühl-Craig adds is the reason presence works: it is the only thing that keeps both poles of the archetype in the room.

3.6 The Psychology of the Transference (1946)

Jung's book-length treatment is his strangest major work and his most complete statement on the relational field. It requires some patience.

The structure: Jung takes a sixteenth-century alchemical text, the *Rosarium Philosophorum*, with its series of woodcut images depicting the union of a King and Queen, and reads the entire sequence as a symbolic map of the transference relationship. This will strike most coaches as eccentric, and I want to explain why it is not.

Jung's argument about alchemy generally is that the alchemists, working before the distinction between psychological and material process was drawn, projected the contents of their own unconscious onto the chemical operations they were performing. Their texts are therefore accidental records of psychic transformation, expressed in the only vocabulary available. The alchemical corpus is, on this reading, a phenomenology of the individuation process compiled by people who did not know that was what they were doing.

Whether or not one accepts that historical claim, the *Rosarium* sequence functions extremely well as a description of what happens in an intense working relationship. Here is the sequence, with the coaching correlate. I offer it not as doctrine but as a lens.

Stage	The Image	The Relational Correlate
1	The Mercurial Fountain	The container is established. The vessel — the contract, the frame, the confidentiality — must exist before anything can happen inside it.

Stage	The Image	The Relational Correlate
2	King and Queen (clothed, left hands joined)	First contact through the persona. Both parties are still presenting. The left-hand joining signals that the connection is already unconscious.
3	The Naked Truth	The personas drop. What is actually the case becomes visible — usually earlier for one party than the other.
4	Immersion in the Bath	Both parties enter the unconscious element. This is the stage of maximum confusion, and it is normal, not a failure of the work.
5	The Conjunction	Deep union — and, in Jung's reading, maximum risk. The boundary between the two becomes genuinely unclear.
6	Death / Putrefactio	The union produces stagnation. The work appears dead. Both parties feel it. This is the point at which most engagements are abandoned.
7	Ascent of the Soul	Something separates out and rises. Meaning becomes visible again, though not yet usable.
8	Purification	The residue is worked through. Slow, unglamorous, and where the real change is consolidated.
9	Return of the Soul	What rose comes back down and is reunited with the substance. Insight becomes embodied.
10	The New Birth	Something genuinely new exists that neither party brought into the room.

Two features of this sequence are worth a coach's attention regardless of what one makes of the alchemy.

First: stage six is expected. The *nigredo*, the blackening, the point at which the work dies — Jung insists this is not a failure but a necessary phase. Every experienced coach knows the engagement that goes flat around session seven or eight, in which both parties feel that something has been lost and neither can say what. The dominant professional response is to re-contract, introduce a new tool, or generate fresh energy. Jung's reading suggests a different response: *stay in it and name it*. The deadness is the material.

Second: the King and the Queen are both in the bath. Jung's entire point in using this imagery is that the transformation is mutual. There is no version of the sequence in which one party remains dry on the bank. A coach who is not affected by the work is not doing the work.

3.7 Fordham: The Jungian Refinement of Countertransference

Michael Fordham, the leading British Jungian analyst of the twentieth century, made the distinction that finally gave the concept clinical precision. Writing from the 1950s onward, he divided countertransference in two:

Type	Definition	Origin	What to do with it
Illusory countertransference	The practitioner's own unresolved material projected onto the patient.	The practitioner's complexes.	Personal work and supervision. This is a contaminant.
Syntonic countertransference	The practitioner's reaction that accurately corresponds to something in the patient's unconscious.	Induced by the patient's state.	Data. Examine it, hold it as hypothesis, test for convergence.

This is the distinction that Session One introduced as parts (a) and (b) of the working definition, and it is the one every supervisor uses daily, whether or not they know Fordham's name for it.

Fordham was scrupulous about the difficulty: **the two are phenomenologically identical from the inside**. You cannot tell, in the moment, whether the boredom you feel is your boredom or the client's deadened inner world arriving in you. Fordham's answer — and it is the honest one — is that the distinction can only be made *retrospectively and relationally*: by testing it against your baseline, against the pattern of the case, and against the perception of a third party. There is no introspective test. There is only supervision.

3.8 Parallel Process in Jungian Terms

Jung did not use the term and did not describe supervision triads. But the Jungian framework accounts for parallel process more elegantly than any other, and it is worth setting out because it will make Session Five much easier.

The mechanism, in Jungian terms, runs as follows:

- 39.** The client's complex is constellated in the coaching relationship.
- 40.** The coach, through *participation mystique* — unconscious identity in the relational field — is infected by it. She does not observe the complex; she is inside it.
- 41.** An unconscious content that has entered a person and not been made conscious *seeks expression*. It cannot be contained indefinitely without being metabolized.
- 42.** In supervision, the coach expresses it the only way an unmetabolized content can be expressed — by enacting it. The complex constellates a second time, now between coach and supervisor.
- 43.** The supervisor, if she can notice her own state rather than being wholly inside it, has direct experiential access to the original complex.

DEFINITION

This gives us the crispest available definition of parallel process:

Parallel process is a complex, constellated in one relationship, seeking expression in the next relationship because it could not be made conscious in the first.

It travels *because* it was not metabolized. Which yields a practical corollary that will matter greatly in Sessions Seven and Eight: **the strength of a parallel process is a rough index of how far the coaching dyad is from being able to name what is happening.** Strong parallel process means the coach is deeply inside something. It is a report on the coach's position, not a report on the coach's competence.

3.9 Integration: The Three Phenomena Inside the Jungian System

Let me now do what this session promised — place all three concepts inside the system rather than treating them as detachable techniques.

Phenomenon	Jungian formulation	What it is for
Transference	A complex — personal or archetypal — constellated in the working relationship and projected onto the practitioner.	It brings the pattern into the room, where it can be lived rather than merely reported; and it deposits an unlived capacity where it can eventually be reclaimed.
Countertransference	Psychic infection: the practitioner is affected through participation in the field. Illusory (the practitioner's complex) or syntonic (induced by the client).	It makes the practitioner a receiving instrument — and, through the wounded-healer dynamic, keeps the practitioner honest about their own woundedness.
Parallel process	A constellated complex seeking expression up the relational chain because it could not be made conscious where it arose.	It delivers to the supervisor an experiential sample of a dynamic that no one in the coaching dyad can yet describe.

And the unifying principle, which is Jung's deepest contribution to this subject:

THE UNIFYING PRINCIPLE

Unconscious content moves toward consciousness. It is not inert. It presses. It uses whatever channel is available — symptom, dream, slip, projection, enactment, and, when a professional relationship is available, that relationship.

Transference, countertransference, and parallel process are therefore not three problems. They are three *routes by which material that wants to become conscious is attempting to do so.*

A coach who treats them as interference is standing in the doorway of the only exit.

3.10 Cautions From Session Three

- **Do not become an amateur analyst.** Jung's system is seductive precisely because it is comprehensive — it explains everything, which is both its power and its epistemological weakness. A coach who begins identifying clients' archetypes and diagnosing their shadow material has left the coaching contract entirely.
- **Do not use the vocabulary with clients.** *Shadow, anima, complex, individuation* — none of these belong in a coaching session. Every useful thing they point to can be said in ordinary English. "What you can't stand in him — is there any version of that in you?" is shadow work, and it requires no Jung at all.
- **Do not treat archetypal transference as a compliment.** When a client relates to you as a sage, the pull to occupy the position is enormous and largely unconscious. That is the specific failure mode of experienced coaches and the specific reason MCC-level practitioners still need supervision.
- **Beware the unfalsifiable.** Portions of Jung cannot be tested by any observation. Hold those portions loosely. A framework that can never be wrong can never be informative either.
- **Do not confuse the wounded healer with permission to be unwell.** Guggenbühl-Craig's point is that the practitioner must *know* their wound, not that the wound qualifies them. An unexamined wound is not a credential.

3.11 Practice Exercises

Exercise 3.1 — The Constellation Log

Duration: two weeks. Materials: journal.

For two weeks, log every occasion — professional or personal — on which you had a reaction that was, on reflection, larger than the event warranted. Record only:

44. The trigger, in one sentence.
45. The reaction, in one sentence.
46. The disproportion, estimated: was the reaction twice the size of the event? Five times?

At the end of two weeks, look for themes. Complexes are identified by their pattern, not by any single instance. Most coaches find between two and four recurring themes, and those themes constitute a serviceable working map of where they are most vulnerable to illusory countertransference.

Exercise 3.2 — Shadow Inventory Through Irritation

Duration: 45 minutes. Materials: journal. Do this one privately.

List five people — colleagues, clients, public figures, family — who irritate you disproportionately. For each, write the specific quality that irritates you, as precisely as you can: not "she's difficult" but "she takes up space she hasn't earned."

Then, for each quality, complete this sentence honestly: *The circumstances under which I would behave that way are...*

The exercise is uncomfortable and is meant to be. It is also the single most reliable route to your own shadow material, and shadow material is the primary engine of illusory countertransference.

Exercise 3.3 — The Projection Return

Duration: 30 minutes. Requires a partner.

Identify a client who has, in some measure, idealized you. With a partner acting as interviewer, work these questions aloud:

- What specifically does this client believe about me?
- Which parts of that are accurate? Be honest in both directions.
- What capacity of the client's own might be sitting inside that belief?
- What have I done, however subtly, to sustain the idealization?
- What single question could I ask that would begin returning the projection without humiliating the client?

Draft that question and write it down. Most coaches find it is far gentler than they expected — usually some form of *what would you have said to yourself about that if I hadn't been here?*

Exercise 3.4 — The Nigredo Review

Duration: 30 minutes.

Identify an engagement that went flat and that you responded to by introducing new energy — a new tool, a re-contract, a change of format. Reconstruct it:

47. When did the flatness begin, and what preceded it?
48. What did I feel in the flat sessions, before I acted?
49. What might have happened if I had named the flatness instead of solving it?
50. What was I avoiding by solving it?

3.12 Inventory 3 — Complex and Projection Screening

Purpose: to identify the themes most likely to generate illusory countertransference in your practice. This is not a diagnostic instrument. It is a map of your own weather.

For each domain, rate the intensity of your typical reaction on a 1–5 scale, then note the client type most likely to trigger it.

Domain	Typical trigger	Intensity (1–5)	Client type that triggers it
Authority	Being evaluated, corrected, or overruled		
Competence	Not knowing; being visibly out of my depth		
Inclusion	Being left out, unchosen, or replaced		
Dependency	Someone needing more from me than I can give		
Rejection	Being disliked or dismissed		
Aggression	Open anger, hostility, or contempt in the room		
Grief	Loss, mortality, unresolved sorrow		
Status	Being outranked; conspicuous success in others		
Achievement	Failure — mine or the client's		
Intimacy	Emotional closeness; being genuinely known		
Control	Situations I cannot influence		
Worth	The question of whether I am enough		

Working With Your Responses

- **Your top three domains are your standing risk profile.** With clients whose material touches these, assume countertransference until demonstrated otherwise, and bring those cases to supervision preferentially rather than exceptionally.
- **Any domain you rated 1 deserves a second look.** Genuine equanimity exists, but so does numbing. Ask: is this domain genuinely quiet in me, or have I simply stopped noticing it?
- **The fourth column is the actionable one.** It converts self-knowledge into caseload awareness, which is the only form of self-knowledge that protects clients.
- **Re-administer annually.** Complexes do not vanish, but their intensity shifts with life circumstances. A bereavement, a redundancy, a child leaving home will move these numbers substantially, and the movement is exactly what supervision needs to know about.

3.13 Reflection Questions

51. Jung said the meeting of two personalities transforms both. Name a client who has changed you. What changed, and did you tell anyone?
52. Where in your practice are you most identified with your persona as a coach? What would it cost to be seen without it?
53. Guggenbühl-Craig argues that the helper who identifies only with health forces the client to carry the entire wound. Where might you be doing this?
54. Fordham says illusory and syntonetic countertransference feel identical from the inside. What does that imply about the sufficiency of your current reflective practice?
55. Which of the ten *Rosarium* stages best describes your longest current engagement? What does that suggest about what is needed next?
56. The prospective view holds that what a client projects onto you may be their own un-lived capacity. Which client is currently keeping something of theirs with you — and what is it?

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SESSION FOUR

The Progeny

How the successors of Freud and Jung turned a contaminant into an instrument — and how it reached coaching.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: The concepts you will actually use in supervision are not Freud's and not Jung's. They belong to their successors. Who built them, what did each one add, and what is the resulting inheritance?

4.1 The Shape of the Story

This session covers roughly seventy years and about twenty significant contributors, and it is easy to get lost. So here is the plot in advance.

Act One (1919–1945): the heretic. Sándor Ferenczi, Freud's closest colleague, insists that the analyst's emotional participation is real, unavoidable, and clinically central. He is marginalized for it, and dies in 1933 with his reputation under a cloud. His work goes underground for fifty years.

Act Two (1946–1960): the turn. In a fifteen-year burst, a group of mostly British analysts — Winnicott, Heimann, Little, Klein, plus Racker in Buenos Aires — reverse the profession's position on countertransference completely. What was a defect becomes the primary instrument of perception.

Act Three (1955–1976): the discovery of parallel process. Once supervision exists as a formal structure and the practitioner's feelings are legitimate data, a third phenomenon becomes visible. Searles names the experience; Ekstein and Wallerstein name the concept; Mattinson brings it into the helping professions generally; Doehrman tests it empirically.

Act Four (1976–present): the relational settlement and the coaching inheritance. The field moves to a thoroughly two-person model. Meanwhile the supervision tradition, particularly in Britain, builds practical frameworks — above all Hawkins and Shohet's Seven-Eyed Model — which is what arrives at the door of coaching supervision in the 2000s.

4.2 Act One — Ferenczi, the Buried Pioneer

Sándor Ferenczi (1873–1933) was Freud's most gifted collaborator and the most clinically inventive figure of the first generation. He was also, for fifty years after his death, treated as a cautionary tale about a brilliant man who lost his judgment. That verdict has been substantially reversed since the publication of his *Clinical Diary* in 1985, and the reversal matters for us.

Ferenczi's claims, radical in the 1920s and now largely mainstream:

- **The analyst's emotional response is real and the patient perceives it.** Patients know when the analyst is bored, irritated, or frightened, however impassive the surface. Ferenczi called the pretence of neutrality "professional hypocrisy" and argued that patients are made worse by being told that what they accurately perceive is a distortion.
- **Patients are exquisitely sensitive to the analyst's unconscious.** In a paper on "the confusion of tongues" (1932) he described the traumatized patient's hypervigilant, almost clairvoyant reading of the caregiver's state — an ability developed in childhood as a survival skill and carried into the treatment.
- **The analyst's honesty is therapeutic.** His experiment in "mutual analysis" — in which he and a patient analyzed each other in alternating sessions — was a failure, and he knew it. But the impulse behind it was correct.

Ferenczi's treatment by the movement is itself a case study in this book's subject. Freud's late letters to him are those of a father to a disappointing son; Ernest Jones's biography effectively wrote him out as psychotic in his final years, a claim now regarded as false and motivated. **The founding institution of the study of countertransference managed its own countertransference toward a dissenting member by pathologizing him.** Coaching bodies should read that sentence twice.

4.3 Act Two — The Turn (1946–1960)

Melanie Klein and Projective Identification (1946)

Klein introduced the term in "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms." In her original usage it was a purely intrapsychic defence: the infant in phantasy splits off an unbearable part of itself and locates it in the object.

What made it revolutionary was the extension made by her followers — Bion above all — into an *interpersonal* process. In the extended sense, projective identification means:

57. A person disowns an unbearable state.
58. They behave, subtly and without intent, in ways that induce that state in another person.
59. The other person actually *feels* it — not as an idea about the first person, but as their own genuine emotional experience.
60. The first person can now perceive the state at a safe distance, in someone else.

THE CENTRAL MECHANISM

Why this matters to a coach more than any other concept in this session.

Projective identification is the mechanism that makes countertransference *informative* rather than merely *personal*. It provides an actual account of how a client's disowned state ends up inside the coach.

Concretely: a client who cannot bear his own sense of incompetence may, without any intention whatever, conduct sessions in a manner that leaves the coach feeling incompetent. The coach's de-skilling is not a failure of the coach. It is a communication — arguably the most accurate communication about the client's inner state available in the room.

And it is the mechanism of parallel process. Session Five rests on this paragraph.

A caution, because this concept is routinely abused: projective identification is an *interpretation of last resort*, not a first explanation. If you feel incompetent with a client, the leading hypotheses are that you slept badly, that you are working outside your expertise, or that the client's situation is genuinely difficult. Only when those are excluded, and only when the pattern is specific to this client and uncharacteristic of you, does the projective hypothesis earn consideration. Coaches who reach for it early are using a sophisticated concept to avoid an ordinary competence question.

Winnicott: "Hate in the Counter-Transference" (1949)

D. W. Winnicott, pediatrician and analyst, published a paper whose title alone was a scandal, and made a distinction that remains foundational.

He argued that the analyst working with severely disturbed patients will inevitably come to hate them, and that this hatred is **objective** — that is, it is a justified and appropriate response to what the patient is actually doing, not a neurotic distortion in the analyst. He made his case by analogy with the mother, listing in unsparing detail the reasons a mother has to hate her infant, and observing that the mother's capacity to hate without acting on it, and without denying it, is precisely what makes her able to hold the child.

The distinction — **subjective countertransference** (my material) versus **objective countertransference** (a reasonable response to what is genuinely being done) — is the same distinction Fordham drew as illusory versus syntonic, arrived at independently from the Kleinian side.

For coaching: the coach who is irritated by a client who is, in objective fact, chronically late, evasive, and contemptuous, is not experiencing a countertransference problem requiring personal work. She is having an accurate response. Treating every reaction as the practitioner's pathology is its own error, and Winnicott is the antidote to it.

Paula Heimann: "On Counter-Transference" (1950)

Four pages, delivered at the Zürich Congress in 1949 and published in 1950. It is the hinge of the entire history.

Heimann's thesis: the analyst's emotional response to the patient is **the most important tool of the work**. It is not an obstacle. It is not to be eliminated. It is an instrument of research into the patient's unconscious, on the grounds that the analyst's unconscious understands the patient's unconscious before conscious understanding arrives.

She was reversing forty years of orthodoxy in a paper shorter than this session. The reaction was fierce — Anna Freud's circle regarded it as licensing self-indulgence, and Heimann herself later worried that it had been taken too far. But the position won, and it is now the mainstream view across essentially every school of depth-oriented practice.

"The analyst's counter-transference is not only part and parcel of the analytic relationship, but it is the patient's creation, it is a part of the patient's personality."

— Paula Heimann, "On Counter-Transference," 1950

That last clause — *it is a part of the patient's personality* — is the sentence that made parallel process thinkable. If the practitioner's feeling is partly the patient's creation, then it can be carried elsewhere and reproduced. Five years later, Searles noticed it happening.

Margaret Little (1951)

Little pushed further than Heimann on a specific point: she argued for limited, disciplined *disclosure* of countertransference to the patient in some circumstances, and — more importantly for us — she insisted that patients respond to the analyst's real state, so that denying it produces a confusing and sometimes damaging double message.

The coaching relevance is immediate and practical. When something has shifted in you during a session, your client has already registered it. The choice is not between disclosure and concealment. It is between an accurate account and an inaccurate one. "I notice I've gone quiet — I think something in what you said landed heavily with me" is a legitimate coaching intervention. Pretending nothing happened is not neutrality; it is a false statement your client can see through.

Heinrich Racker: The Complete Taxonomy (1953, 1968)

Racker, working in Buenos Aires, produced the most systematic account, and it is the one every supervisor should carry. Two distinctions.

First distinction: the source.

- **Countertransference neurosis** — the practitioner's own unresolved material. Fordham's illusory; Winnicott's subjective.
- **Total countertransference** — the full range of the practitioner's responses, most of which are responses to the patient.

Second distinction — and this is Racker's great contribution — the position the practitioner is pulled into.

Type	What happens	What it feels like	What it reveals
Concordant identification	The practitioner identifies with the corresponding part of the patient — ego with ego, feeling with feeling.	I feel what the client feels. Their sadness produces sadness in me.	Access to the client's subjective experience. The basis of empathy.
Complementary identification	The practitioner identifies with an <i>internal object</i> of the patient — that is, with a figure from the client's inner world.	I feel toward the client the way someone in their life feels, or felt. I become critical, or protective, or dismissive.	Access to the client's relational world — what it is like to be on the other side of them.

The distinction is enormously useful in supervision, and here is why. **Concordant countertransference tells you about the client's inner experience. Complementary countertransference tells you about the client's impact.** A supervisor who can ask *are you feeling what she feels, or are you feeling what her team feels?* has just sorted the data into the two categories that lead to entirely different coaching conversations.

Return to Marcus and Dana from Session One. When Marcus feels warm, protected, and reluctant to disappoint, is that concordant or complementary? It is complementary: he has been recruited into the position of the authority Dana must never disappoint. Once you see that, the coaching question stops being *how do I get her back on the agenda* and becomes *what happens in her world to people who occupy this position?*

Bion: Container, Reverie, and the Discipline of Not Knowing

Wilfred Bion supplied the theory that makes the whole apparatus coherent.

Container/contained. The infant, unable to process raw distress, projects it into the mother. The mother receives it, tolerates it, metabolizes it, and returns it in a form the infant can manage. This is not merely a soothing function; it is how the capacity to think is built.

Transposed to professional relationships, this is the most accurate description available of what a good coach does with a client's unformed distress, and of what a good supervisor does with a coach's. **The supervisor contains the coach so that the coach can contain the client.** When the chain fails — when the coach cannot metabolize what she has received — the unmetabolized material moves up the chain. That is parallel process, described in Bion's terms, and it is the most theoretically satisfying account of it.

Reverie. The receptive, loosely attentive, non-purposive state in which containment happens. It cannot be forced and it is destroyed by anxiety about performing.

“Without memory or desire.” Bion's notorious injunction: the practitioner should approach each session without memory of previous sessions and without desire for any

particular outcome, because both saturate perception and prevent the genuinely new from being noticed.

That is unachievable as literally stated, and Bion knew it. But as a *direction of travel* it is a superb corrective for coaches, whose training pushes hard in the opposite direction — toward preparation, goal-holding, and outcome accountability. A coach who cannot occasionally set the goal down long enough to see what is actually in the room is running a project plan rather than a coaching conversation. Nancy Kline's Thinking Environment, which many coaches know well, is arriving at a similar place from an entirely different tradition.

Sandler: Role Responsiveness (1976)

Joseph Sandler's paper "Countertransference and Role-Responsiveness" deserves special mention because it is the most immediately usable idea in this entire session for a working coach.

Sandler's observation: the patient does not merely transfer feelings; the patient unconsciously attempts to *actualize* a particular relationship — to elicit from the analyst a specific role that completes an internal scenario. And the analyst, through what Sandler called **free-floating responsiveness**, tends to comply, sliding into the role before noticing.

So the useful supervisory question is not *what am I feeling?* but a sharper one:

THE MOST USEFUL QUESTION IN THIS SESSION

"What role am I being invited into, and have I already accepted it?"

Coaches recognize this instantly once it is named. The client who elicits the wise expert. The client who elicits the disappointed parent. The client who elicits the admiring audience. The client who elicits the rescuer. The client who elicits the exhausted, faintly resentful colleague.

In every case the coach did not decide to occupy the role. The role was offered with great skill, and accepted within about three sessions, entirely outside awareness.

Kohut and the Selfobject Transferences

Heinz Kohut's self psychology, developed from the 1960s, is worth a coach's attention because his three transference types map onto executive coaching with uncanny precision.

- **Mirroring transference** — the client needs you to reflect their worth back to them. Presents as bringing achievements, seeking recognition, deflating visibly if the recognition is withheld. Extremely common in senior executives whose position prevents anyone else from giving it to them.
- **Idealizing transference** — the client needs you to be strong, wise, and unshakeable, so that they can draw strength from proximity. Presents as deference, quotation, and a quiet crisis when you show limitation.

- **Twinship transference** — the client needs you to be like them. Presents as a search for common ground, delight in shared background, and distress at difference.

Kohut's central clinical point is one coaching would do well to absorb: **these needs are developmental, not pathological**. They are not to be interpreted away. They are to be met, in measured and appropriate degree, and then — through the ordinary and inevitable small failures of the practitioner — gradually internalized. Kohut called this *transmuting internalization*: the client builds the capacity to do for themselves what they initially needed you to do.

That is an outstanding description of what good coaching actually accomplishes with a senior leader, and it is available without a word of clinical vocabulary.

4.4 Act Three — The Discovery of Parallel Process

This section is deliberately brief because Session Five is devoted to it. Here is only the lineage.

Harold Searles (1955), in “The Informational Value of the Supervisor’s Emotional Experiences,” reported that his own emotional reactions while supervising frequently reproduced the emotional situation between the supervisee and the patient — and that these reactions were often the most reliable information available about the case. He called it the **reflection process**.

Rudolf Ekstein and Robert Wallerstein (1958), in *The Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapy*, gave the phenomenon its enduring name — **parallel process** — and located it within a full theory of supervision.

Janet Mattinson (1975), at the Tavistock Institute of Marital Studies, published *The Reflection Process in Casework Supervision*, which took the concept out of psychoanalytic training and into social work and the helping professions generally. Mattinson is the direct ancestor of the British supervision tradition that coaching supervision inherited, and her book is the reason a coaching supervisor in London today uses this vocabulary without necessarily having read a word of Searles.

Mary Jean Doehrman (1976) conducted the first serious empirical study, following four supervisees and their supervisors intensively. Her findings complicated the picture usefully: parallel process was pervasive, it ran in *both* directions — supervision dynamics reproducing themselves in therapy as often as the reverse — and its resolution in supervision was frequently followed by movement in the stalled case.

4.5 Act Four — The Relational Settlement

From the 1980s the American relational school — Stephen Mitchell, Jay Greenberg, Lewis Aron, Jessica Benjamin — completed the move to a fully two-person model. Three of their contributions matter here.

Enactment. Rather than transference and countertransference as two separate phenomena, the relational school describes *enactments*: jointly constructed episodes in which both parties are caught in a repetition neither chose. The question stops being “whose is this?” and becomes “what are we doing together, and what is it a version of?” This is a better description of what actually happens in a stuck coaching relationship than any purely one-person account.

Mutuality without symmetry. Aron’s formulation: the relationship is mutual — both are affected, both contribute — but it is not symmetrical. The responsibility, the framing, and the containment belong to the practitioner. This is the exact principle that governs the ICF conception of partnership, and it resolves the confusion coaches feel between “partnering with the client” and “being responsible for the process.”

Thirdness. Jessica Benjamin’s concept of a “third” position — a shared vantage point from which both parties can observe what is happening between them — is essentially a description of what supervision provides structurally, and what a skilled coach can sometimes create inside a session.

The Post-Jungian Contribution

Running alongside, the post-Jungians developed their own line. Beyond Fordham, covered in Session Three:

- **Andrew Samuels** distinguished **embodied** countertransference (the practitioner’s bodily and affective experience) from **reflective** countertransference (the practitioner’s thoughts and images about the client), and — in a 1985 survey of practicing analysts — documented how routinely practitioners used bodily sensation and spontaneous imagery as clinical data while rarely reporting it in writing. This is directly relevant to supervision practice: **if you are not asking coaches about their bodies, you are discarding a channel.**
- **Nathan Schwartz-Salant** developed the notion of the **interactive field** — a third area between practitioner and client, belonging to neither, with its own dynamics. This is a more useful frame for group and systemic supervision than any strictly two-person model.
- **David Sedgwick** produced the fullest Jungian treatment of countertransference through the wounded-healer lens, arguing that the practitioner’s vulnerability is the actual mechanism of perception rather than an unfortunate side condition of it.
- **James Hillman**, characteristically, inverted the whole question — arguing that the practitioner should attend less to *who* is feeling what and more to the image or figure that has entered the room between them.

4.6 The Coaching Inheritance

How did any of this reach a profession that did not exist until the 1980s?

Almost entirely through **supervision**, and almost entirely through Britain. The chain runs: psychoanalytic supervision (Searles, Ekstein and Wallerstein) → Tavistock and social-work supervision (Mattinson) → counselling and psychotherapy supervision (Hawkins and Shohet, 1989; Proctor; Carroll) → coaching supervision (Hawkins and Smith; Bachkirova; Clutterbuck; de Haan; Turner; Passmore).

Contributor	Contribution to coaching supervision
Peter Hawkins & Robin Shohet	The Seven-Eyed Model (1985, published 1989) — the dominant supervision framework in the English-speaking world, and the structure used in Sessions Seven and Eight.
Brigid Proctor	The three functions of supervision — normative, formative, restorative — which locate countertransference work primarily in the restorative and formative domains.
Michael Carroll	Supervision as a discipline in its own right, with its own competencies rather than as senior practice.
Tatiana Bachkirova	The coach's self as instrument; the developmental and philosophical grounding of coaching supervision.
Erik de Haan	Empirical research on critical moments in coaching — which demonstrates that coaches' and clients' accounts of the same session diverge sharply, precisely as a transference/countertransference account would predict.
David Clutterbuck	Systemic and team dimensions; supervision of team coaching, where parallel process becomes multi-layered.
Peter Hawkins & Nick Smith	The systemic extension — Mode Seven — and the application of the model to organizational consultancy.

The critical thing to understand about this inheritance is that **coaching received the practical frameworks without the theoretical substructure**. A coach can be trained to use the Seven-Eyed Model — a superb instrument — without ever encountering Racker, Heimann, Fordham, or Sandler. Eye Four is presented as “the coach's own process” and Eye Six as “the supervisor's own process,” and coaches nod, and then in practice do not know what to *do* in those modes, because the concepts that populate them were left behind in the transmission.

Repairing that gap is the purpose of this book, and it is why Sessions Two, Three, and Four exist before Sessions Seven and Eight.

4.7 The Inheritance Summarized

If you retain nothing else from this session, retain this table. Every item in it is used operationally in the remaining sessions.

Concept	Who	The working question it generates
Projective identification	Klein, Bion	Am I feeling something the client cannot bear to feel?
Objective countertransference	Winnicott	Is my reaction a reasonable response to what is actually being done?
Countertransference as instrument	Heimann	What is my feeling telling me about this client?
Illusory vs. syntonic	Fordham	Is this mine, or is it induced?
Concordant identification	Racker	Am I feeling what the client feels?
Complementary identification	Racker	Am I feeling what <i>others in the client's life</i> feel toward them?
Container / contained	Bion	Can I hold this without either exploding it back or going numb?
Role responsiveness	Sandler	What role have I been invited into — and did I already take it?
Selfobject transference	Kohut	What is this client needing me to <i>be</i> — mirror, ideal, or twin?
Enactment	Relational school	What are we doing together, and what is it a version of?
Embodied countertransference	Samuels	What is happening in my body?
Reflection process / parallel process	Searles, Ekstein & Wallerstein, Mattinson	Have I just met the client?

4.8 Cautions From Session Four

- **Do not use projective identification as a first explanation.** It is the last hypothesis after ordinary ones are excluded. A coach who explains every difficult reaction as the client's projection has found an elegant way never to be responsible for anything.
- **Do not treat objective countertransference as a licence.** Winnicott legitimizes the practitioner's genuine response to genuinely difficult behavior. He does not legitimize acting on it, and he certainly does not legitimize skipping the question of whether it is objective.
- **Do not import selfobject language into your case notes.** "Client presents with idealizing transference" is a clinical formulation about a person who contracted for coaching. Write "client defers to my view more than is useful" and you have said the same thing without the overreach.

- **Do not mistake the map for competence.** You have now met twenty theorists. You are not thereby able to work with this material — you are able to *recognize and name* it, which is a different and more modest achievement, and the correct one for a coach.

4.9 Practice Exercises

Exercise 4.1 — The Role Audit (Sandler)

Duration: 40 minutes. Materials: current client list.

For each active client, complete the sentence: **“With this client I have become the...”** Use a noun phrase: the patient teacher, the impressed audience, the disappointed parent, the fellow sufferer, the last hope, the reliable schedule, the safe rebellion.

Then, for each, answer two questions:

- 61.** What did the client do, specifically, that invited this role? Look for small, repeated behaviors rather than dramatic ones.
- 62.** Who else in the client’s life occupies this role?

Coaches typically find that two or three roles recur across their caseload. Those recurring roles are your own signature — the positions you are most easily recruited into — and they belong in your supervision contract.

Exercise 4.2 — Concordant or Complementary? (Racker)

Duration: 30 minutes. Requires a partner.

Choose three clients with whom you have a strong recurring feeling. For each, the partner asks only these questions and records the answers:

- Describe the feeling in one word.
- Does the client also feel this? Is this their feeling arriving in you?
- Or is this how someone *else* in their world feels toward them?
- If the second: who? Name the person if you can.
- What coaching question becomes available now that did not exist before?

That last question is the whole point. Sorting the countertransference is not an academic exercise; it changes what you can usefully ask next week.

Exercise 4.3 — The Body Channel (Samuels)

Duration: ongoing, four weeks. Materials: session log.

At the close of every session for four weeks, before writing anything else, record three physical observations:

- 63.** Where was I holding tension?

64. What was my breathing like?

65. What was my energy at the end compared with the start — higher, lower, or scattered?

Do not interpret. Just log. After four weeks, sort the entries by client. Most coaches discover at least one client with a completely consistent somatic signature they had never consciously registered, and that signature is almost always the fastest route into the case in supervision.

Exercise 4.4 — The Bion Session

Duration: one session. Requires client consent to a change of format — or use with a peer in practice.

Conduct one coaching session having done no preparation whatever: no review of notes, no recollection of the previous session's agreement, no outcome in mind. Enter the room empty.

Afterward, write on two questions: *What did I notice that I would not otherwise have noticed?* and *What was the cost?* Both halves matter. This is an exercise in discovering what your preparation buys you and what it obscures — not an argument for abandoning preparation.

4.10 Inventory 4 — Countertransference Type Screen

Purpose: to sort your characteristic responses into the categories established in this session, so that supervision can work with them efficiently.

Select one client with whom something is currently unclear or stuck. Complete every row for that client. Do not skip rows that feel inapplicable — the blanks are informative.

Question	Your response
1. Name the dominant feeling I have in sessions with this client (one word).	
2. Is this feeling characteristic of me generally? (Y/N)	
3. If N: what makes it uncharacteristic — intensity, kind, or timing?	
4. Is my reaction a reasonable response to observable behavior? (Winnicott: objective?)	
5. Am I feeling what the client feels? (Racker: concordant)	
6. Am I feeling what others in their system feel toward them? (Racker: complementary)	
7. What role have I been invited into? (Sandler)	
8. Did I accept it — and when?	
9. What is happening in my body in these sessions? (Samuels)	

Question	Your response
10. What might this client be unable to bear feeling? (Klein/Bion)	
11. What am I unable to hold or metabolize here? (Bion)	
12. What of my own is most likely activated? (Fordham: illusory)	
13. What convergent evidence exists from any other source?	
14. What is my working hypothesis — stated as a hypothesis?	
15. What would disconfirm it?	

Note on item 15. If you cannot answer it, stop and do not proceed to act on the hypothesis. An account of your client that no observation could disconfirm is not a formulation. It is a belief, and beliefs about clients are how coaches do harm while feeling perceptive.

4.11 Reflection Questions

66. Ferenczi was pathologized by his own movement for insisting that the practitioner's emotional participation was real. Where does coaching currently pathologize what it does not wish to examine?
67. Heimann said the countertransference is partly the client's creation. What are your clients currently creating in you?
68. Which of Kohut's three selfobject needs — mirroring, idealizing, twinship — do *you* most want met by your clients? Answer honestly; every practitioner has one.
69. Sandler says we accept the offered role before we notice it. What is the earliest signal, for you, that you have taken a role?
70. Coaching inherited the frameworks without the substructure. What has that cost you in your own supervision, and what would you now ask for that you did not know to ask for before?

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SESSION FIVE

Parallel Process

How a dynamic travels — and why the supervisor sometimes knows more than the coach who was there.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: Is parallel process a real phenomenon or a professional folk belief — and if it is real, what exactly is being transmitted, by what mechanism, and what should be done about it?

5.1 The Claim, Stated Plainly

Parallel process asserts something that ought to strike you as improbable: that the *shape* of one relationship can reproduce itself inside a second relationship, without anyone intending it, without anyone noticing it, and often with remarkable fidelity of detail.

The classical form runs upward. A coach works with a client. Something in that dyad cannot be spoken. The coach brings the case to supervision, and the unspoken thing arrives in the supervision room — not as description, but as *live enactment*. The supervisor finds herself in a relationship with the coach that has the same emotional architecture as the coaching relationship being discussed.

DEFINITION

The formal definition used in this book:

Parallel process is the unconscious reproduction, within a supervisory relationship, of dynamics operating within the working relationship being supervised — or, in the reverse direction, the reproduction within the working relationship of dynamics operating in supervision.

It is distinguished from mere *description* by three features: the supervisee does not report the dynamic, does not intend it, and is generally surprised when it is named.

If that claim is true, it has an extraordinary practical consequence: **the supervisor has independent access to the coaching relationship**. She is not restricted to the supervisee's account, with all its inevitable gaps and self-protections. She has a working sample, running live in her own office, of the thing being discussed.

If it is false, then supervisors across the helping professions have spent seventy years mistaking their own reactions for clairvoyance, and the practice built on it is a species of professional mysticism.

This session takes both possibilities seriously. I will present the history, the mechanism, the evidence — including the parts of the evidence that are unimpressive — and the disciplined practice that follows if you conclude, as I do, that the phenomenon is real but routinely over-claimed.

5.2 Searles: The Original Observation (1955)

Harold Searles, working at Chestnut Lodge with severely disturbed patients, published “The Informational Value of the Supervisor’s Emotional Experiences” in *Psychiatry* in 1955. It is the founding document, and its argument is worth following closely because Searles was scrupulous in a way many of his successors were not.

Searles reported that while supervising, he would experience strong and often peculiar emotional states — boredom, irritation, confusion, inadequacy, a sense of being manipulated — which did not seem to fit his relationship with the supervisee. On examining them, he repeatedly found that they corresponded closely to the emotional situation between the supervisee and the patient under discussion.

He named this the **reflection process**, and he made three claims that remain the state of the art:

71. The supervisor’s emotional experience carries information about the therapist–patient relationship.
72. This information is frequently *unavailable by any other route*, because the therapist is inside the dynamic and cannot report what they cannot see.
73. The supervisor must first determine whether the reaction belongs to the supervisor — to their own life, their own relationship with the supervisee, their own state that day — before treating it as reflected data.

That third claim is the one most often dropped in transmission, and dropping it is how the concept becomes dangerous. Searles did not say the supervisor’s feelings are the client. He said they may be, after everything else has been excluded.

5.3 Ekstein and Wallerstein: The Concept Formalized (1958)

The Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapy named the phenomenon **parallel process** and, more importantly, embedded it in a theory of supervision as a system rather than as a teaching transaction.

Their key contribution for our purposes is the concept of the **clinical rhombus** — the four-cornered system of patient, therapist, supervisor, and administrator (in coaching: client, coach, supervisor, and sponsoring organization). Ekstein and Wallerstein insisted that dynamics do not stay in their corner. The system is permeable, and pressure applied anywhere is felt everywhere.

They also introduced the useful notion of the **problem about learning** versus the **learning problem** — distinguishing a supervisee's genuine skill gap from a difficulty that arises specifically from the emotional impact of a particular case. This is a distinction every coaching supervisor needs and few name explicitly. A coach who cannot challenge *this* client has a problem about learning; a coach who cannot challenge *any* client has a learning problem. They call for entirely different supervisory responses, and confusing them is one of the more common supervisory errors.

5.4 Mattinson: The Concept Enters the Helping Professions (1975)

Janet Mattinson's *The Reflection Process in Casework Supervision*, written at the Tavistock Institute of Marital Studies, is the reason coaching supervision uses this vocabulary at all. She took a concept developed for the training of psychoanalysts and demonstrated it in social work with marital cases — shorter engagements, less regressed clients, practitioners without analytic training. In other words, she demonstrated it in conditions much closer to coaching than to analysis.

Her clinical examples are still the best in the literature. Her most-cited: a caseworker presenting a couple in which each partner insisted the other must change first. In the supervision group, the discussion deadlocked into two camps, each insisting the other's formulation must be abandoned first. Nobody planned this. Nobody noticed it for forty minutes.

Mattinson's contribution beyond the demonstration was her insistence that the reflection process is *most likely to occur where the practitioner is most stuck*, and that its appearance is therefore a signal of location rather than a verdict on competence. This is the single most humane thing anyone has said about parallel process and it should govern how supervisors name it.

5.5 Doehrman: The Empirical Test (1976)

Mary Jean Doehrman's doctoral study — four therapists, eight patients, four supervisors, intensive interviews across a semester — remains the most substantial empirical investigation. Her findings were more interesting than a simple confirmation.

- Parallel process occurred in every case studied. It was not occasional.
- **It ran in both directions.** Doehrman found supervision dynamics reproducing themselves in therapy at least as often as the reverse. A therapist who felt criticized by his supervisor became subtly critical of his patient; a therapist locked in a struggle for autonomy with a supervisor became controlling with a patient.
- Resolution of the dynamic in supervision was frequently followed by movement in the previously stalled case — sometimes dramatically, within one or two sessions.
- The therapists were, almost without exception, unaware of the parallel until it was named.

DOWNWARD PARALLEL PROCESS

The downward direction deserves special attention from coaching supervisors, because it is almost never discussed.

If a supervisor is subtly competitive with a supervisee, that supervisee may become subtly competitive with a client. If a supervisor over-functions — offering solutions, filling silences, demonstrating expertise — the supervisee may over-function with clients the following week.

The supervisor's conduct is not neutral input into the coach's practice. It is modeled behavior with a downstream carrier. This is a large part of why Session Eight exists.

5.6 What Is Actually Being Transmitted? Five Mechanisms

“Parallel process” names a pattern, not a mechanism. Several distinct mechanisms can produce the same observable pattern, and distinguishing them matters because they call for different responses.

Mechanism 1: Projective Identification

The Kleinian account, and the one most commonly invoked. The client deposits an unbearable state in the coach; the coach, unable to metabolize it, deposits it in the supervisor. The state itself is what travels.

Signature: the supervisor experiences a strong, specific, and uncharacteristic affect — typically one of the difficult ones: futility, incompetence, irritation, sleepiness, contempt.

Mechanism 2: Identification with the Client

The simpler and probably more common account. The coach, through prolonged empathic immersion, has partly identified with the client, and in supervision presents *as* the client — adopting the client's posture, vocabulary, defensive style, and relational stance.

Signature: the supervisee's manner changes when discussing this case. Vocabulary shifts. Body posture changes. Experienced supervisors often report that the supervisee “sounds like someone else.”

Mechanism 3: Unmetabolized Affect (Bion)

The containment account. The coach has received something she cannot process. Unprocessed material cannot be described — description requires prior processing — so it is discharged as action.

Signature: the supervisee's presentation of the case is oddly flat, disorganized, or excessively detailed, and the supervisor finds herself unable to think clearly.

Mechanism 4: The Role Chain (Sandler)

The client elicits a role from the coach; the coach, occupying that role, elicits its complement from the supervisor. Nothing mystical is transmitted — only a behavioral invitation, propagating.

Signature: the supervisor notices herself behaving unlike her usual supervisory self — more directive, more cautious, more admiring, more withholding.

Mechanism 5: Systemic Isomorphism

The systems-theory account, which requires no unconscious transmission at all. Nested systems under similar pressures tend to develop similar structures. If the client's organization is characterized by a particular dynamic — say, deference to authority combined with covert non-compliance — that dynamic may appear at every level of every related system, including the coaching and the supervision, simply because the same pressures are producing the same adaptation.

Signature: the pattern appears at the organizational level too, and is visible in structures and processes rather than only in relationships. This mechanism becomes dominant in team coaching and organizational work, and it is where Hawkins and Smith's Mode Seven does its work.

MECHANISM DETERMINES INTERVENTION

Why the distinction matters practically.

If the mechanism is **projective identification**, the supervisory work is containment: hold it, name it carefully, hand back a metabolized version.

If it is **identification with the client**, the work is differentiation: help the coach find herself again as separate from the client.

If it is **unmetabolized affect**, the work is processing: slow down, stay with the feeling, do not move to solution.

If it is a **role chain**, the work is behavioral: name the role, decline it, notice what changes.

If it is **isomorphism**, the work is systemic: widen the frame and look at the organization, not the dyad.

A supervisor who has only one account of parallel process will apply one intervention to five different situations.

5.7 The Honest Assessment of the Evidence

I promised you the unimpressive part, and here it is. A profession that takes its own concepts seriously should be able to say what it does not know.

The evidence base for parallel process is thinner than its ubiquity in supervision literature would suggest. The concept is nearly universally taught and nearly universally

believed among supervisors, and the empirical literature testing it is small, methodologically difficult, and mixed in its results.

The core problems:

- **Confirmation bias is structurally unavoidable.** A supervisor who believes in parallel process will find it. Any dynamic in supervision can be mapped onto some dynamic in the case, because relationships have many features and the mapping criteria are loose.
- **There is no agreed operational definition.** Studies define it differently; some measure similarity of interpersonal behavior, some measure affective correspondence, some rely on supervisor judgment. Results are not comparable.
- **Alternative explanations are rarely excluded.** Common-factors explanations — the coach's stable interpersonal style produces similar dynamics in both relationships — account for a great deal of what is attributed to transmission. If a coach is habitually deferential, she will be deferential with clients and with supervisors, and the resulting "parallel" requires no transmission whatever.
- **The studies that exist are small.** Doehrman's four therapists remains among the largest intensive designs. Later work — Friedlander and colleagues' case-study evidence, McNeill and Worthen's analysis, Tracey and colleagues' review — finds the phenomenon plausible and locally demonstrable but resists strong general claims.

So what should a responsible practitioner conclude? My own position, stated as such:

MY POSITION

Parallel process is best treated as a heuristic of extraordinary practical value and uncertain theoretical status.

It generates hypotheses that repeatedly prove productive. It gives supervisors access to material that is otherwise unreachable. Cases move after it is named, often dramatically. That is a strong practical warrant.

It is not, however, a validated mechanism, and it should never be used as evidence for a conclusion about a client. "I felt X in supervision, therefore your client is Y" is not an inference. It is a guess in professional dress.

The correct posture: **hold it loosely, name it tentatively, test it against the case, and abandon it cheerfully when it does not earn its keep.**

5.8 Recognizing Parallel Process: The Practical Signs

What actually alerts an experienced supervisor? In my own practice and in the accounts of supervisors I have trained, the following recur.

Signs in the Supervisor

- **Uncharacteristic affect.** You feel something you do not usually feel in supervision, particularly with this supervisee.
- **Uncharacteristic behavior.** You find yourself advising when you rarely advise, or withholding when you rarely withhold, or talking more than usual.
- **Cognitive fog.** You cannot think clearly, cannot hold the case in mind, lose the thread, or find yourself unable to formulate a question.
- **Somatic change.** Sleepiness is the classic one and is nearly always significant. Also: chest tightness, restlessness, a wish to leave the room.
- **Time distortion.** The session feels much longer or much shorter than it was.
- **The urge to rescue — or to abandon.** Either extreme, arriving with unusual force.

Signs in the Supervisee

- **Presentation style changes** when this case comes up — vocabulary, pace, posture, humor.
- **Excessive detail or excessive vagueness.** Both are containment failures.
- **The case is brought repeatedly without progressing.**
- **Requests for reassurance rather than exploration.**
- **A defensive edge to the presentation** — the coach is arguing a case rather than examining one.

Signs in the Relationship

- **Something is happening between you that is out of pattern.** A collusive warmth. A subtle competition. An unusual formality.
- **A structural repetition.** The coach cancels; the client cancels. The coach arrives late; the client arrives late. The coach asks for extra time; the client asks for extra time. These structural echoes are the easiest to spot and the most often missed, because supervisors treat logistics as logistics.

5.9 Working With It: The Discipline

Noticing is the easy part. What you do next is the professional question, and there is a sequence.

Step One: Check Yourself First

Searles's third claim, and the one most often skipped. Before treating your reaction as reflected data, exclude:

74. Is this my ordinary state today — tired, hungry, preoccupied, unwell?
75. Is this about my relationship with *this supervisee* independent of the case?
76. Is this one of my known complexes, from Inventory 3?

77. Is this a reasonable response to what the supervisee is actually doing — Winnicott’s objective countertransference?

Only when all four are excluded does the reflection hypothesis earn a hearing. A supervisor who skips this step is not doing supervision; she is broadcasting.

Step Two: Hold Before Naming

The temptation to name immediately is strong and should usually be resisted. Premature naming has three costs: it is often wrong; it interrupts the enactment before it has fully declared itself; and it positions the supervisor as the one who sees, which is precisely the wrong position for the work that follows.

The practical guidance I give supervisors I train: **wait until you have two independent instances**. One uncharacteristic feeling is a mood. The same feeling recurring, or the feeling plus a structural echo, is worth naming.

Step Three: Name It as Yours, Tentatively, With the Question Attached

The form of words matters enormously, and the difference between a good and a bad naming is almost entirely grammatical.

Do not say	Why it fails	Say instead
“This is parallel process.”	Asserts a mechanism, uses jargon, closes inquiry, positions the supervisor as expert on the coach’s unconscious.	“Something is happening in me here that I want to put on the table.”
“You’re doing to me what your client does to you.”	Accusatory. Places responsibility on the supervisee for an unconscious process. Produces defence.	“I notice I’ve become quite careful with you in the last ten minutes. I’m curious whether careful is a word that lives anywhere in this case.”
“Your client is clearly avoidant.”	Converts the supervisor’s feeling into a diagnosis of a person who is not in the room and has not consented to be characterized.	“I’m left with a sense that we keep approaching something and turning away. Does that resonate at all?”
“I think I’m feeling your countertransference.”	Claims access to the supervisee’s interior. Unfalsifiable and slightly grandiose.	“I feel oddly de-skilled just now, which isn’t usual for me. I don’t know what it means yet. Does it connect to anything?”

Three grammatical rules govern all of these:

78. **Own it in the first person.** *I notice in myself...* Not *you are...*
79. **Mark the uncertainty.** *I don’t know what this is.* The uncertainty is not a weakness in the intervention; it is the intervention. It models the exact stance you want the coach to take toward her own reactions.

80. End with a genuine question. And then be genuinely willing for the answer to be *no, that doesn't land at all* — which happens, and is fine, and should be received without argument.

Step Four: Work the Difference, Not the Insight

The single most common failure in supervision is stopping at recognition. The coach says *oh — yes, that's exactly it*, both parties feel the click of insight, and the session ends on a high note with nothing changed.

The insight is the beginning. The questions that follow are the work:

- What is it like for you to be in that position with your client?
- What has it cost you to stay in it?
- What would be different in the room if you were not in it?
- What is the smallest thing you could do differently in the next session?
- What will make that hard?

Doehrman's finding — that resolution in supervision is followed by movement in the case — depends entirely on this fourth step. Recognition alone produces a pleasant supervision session and an unchanged client.

5.10 Parallel Process in Group Supervision

In group supervision the phenomenon takes on a distinctive and highly useful form: **the dynamic distributes itself across the group.**

Rather than the supervisor carrying the whole reaction, different group members carry different parts of the client's system. One member becomes impatient; another becomes protective; a third disengages entirely; a fourth intellectualizes. The group has, without any intent, produced a working model of the client's relational world, with the parts allocated to different bodies.

This is why group supervision is disproportionately powerful for stuck cases, and it suggests a specific supervisory technique which I use constantly:

TECHNIQUE

The Sculpt Inquiry. When a group discussion of a case becomes lively, divided, or strangely flat, stop the content discussion entirely and ask:

"Before we go further — I'd like each of us to say, in one sentence, what we have been feeling in the last ten minutes. Not what we think about the case. What we have been feeling."

Go round without discussion. Then ask the presenting coach a single question: **"Is any of that familiar?"**

In my experience this produces more usable material in four minutes than forty minutes of case analysis, and it does so without anyone needing to know the phrase *parallel process*.

A caution specific to groups: **splitting**. Where the client's system is characterized by polarization, the group may polarize — and the polarization can become genuinely acrimonious before anyone notices what is happening. The supervisor's task at that moment is not to adjudicate the disagreement but to name the shape of it. "We have divided into two camps in the last quarter hour, and neither camp can hear the other. I want to hold that as data before we go on."

5.11 Parallel Process in Team and Systemic Coaching

When the client is a team or a system rather than an individual, the phenomenon becomes multi-layered and the isomorphism mechanism becomes dominant.

A team coach working with a leadership team fractured between two factions may find that her co-coach relationship develops a fracture along the same lines. Two supervisors of the same engagement may find themselves in disagreement mirroring the client system's central conflict. The pattern replicates at every level of the nested system — which is exactly what systems theory predicts, and does not require any unconscious transmission to explain.

The practical instruction for team coaches is straightforward and frequently ignored: **the co-coach relationship is data**. When you and your co-coach begin to disagree about the team, before you resolve the disagreement, ask whether the disagreement *is the team*. In supervision of team coaching this question should be asked routinely rather than exceptionally.

5.12 The Coach's Use of Parallel Process Without a Supervisor

One further application, less often discussed. A coach working with a client inside an organization is herself in a parallel position — and her experience of the client's system may be reproducing the client's experience of it.

Concretely: a coach who finds it unexpectedly difficult to get scheduling confirmed, whose invoices go unpaid, who cannot get a straight answer from HR about the contract, may be experiencing the organization's characteristic way of relating — which may be precisely what her client experiences daily and has stopped being able to see.

This is legitimate and useful data, and it is available to a coach with no supervisor at all. It is also the point at which the caution must be repeated: it is a hypothesis, it may simply be a badly run administrative function, and it should be tested rather than assumed.

5.13 Cautions From Session Five

- **Parallel process is not an explanation of first resort.** When a supervision session goes badly, the most likely explanations are: poor contracting, a mismatch, a bad day, or

a genuine skill gap. Reaching for parallel process first is how supervisors avoid ordinary and necessary feedback.

- **It must never become a way of avoiding the competence conversation.** If a coach is unprepared, unethical, or working beyond her competence, the response is direct and normative. Framing a straightforward performance problem as parallel process is a failure of supervisory nerve dressed as sophistication.
- **Beware supervisory grandiosity.** The claim “I know what is happening with your client because of how I feel” is intoxicating and largely unverifiable. Supervisors who make it frequently should examine what need it is meeting in them.
- **Never assert it as fact about the client.** The client is not in the room, has not consented to be characterized, and is entitled to not be diagnosed by proxy. Everything must be held as hypothesis and tested in the coaching, not concluded in supervision.
- **Do not teach the concept to coaching clients.** This is supervision vocabulary. It has no place in a coaching session.
- **Watch the direction.** Before concluding that a dynamic came up from the client, consider whether it came down from you. Doehrman’s downward finding is the least-used and most professionally important result in the literature.

5.14 Practice Exercises

Exercise 5.1 — The Structural Echo Audit

Duration: 30 minutes. Materials: supervision records and coaching records for the same period.

Lay the two records side by side for the last six months. Ignore content entirely and look only at *structure*: cancellations, lateness, over-runs, requests to reschedule, forgotten notes, changes of format, extensions, gaps.

Mark every instance in which a structural event in supervision was preceded within two weeks by a similar structural event in a coaching engagement. Do not interpret. Just count.

Most coaches find at least two. Structural echoes are the crudest form of the phenomenon and the easiest to verify, which makes them the right place to begin building confidence in your own observation.

Exercise 5.2 — The Blind Presentation

Duration: 30 minutes. Requires a partner or small group.

The presenting coach describes a stuck case for five minutes only, and is then silent.

The listener or listeners do **not** ask questions about the case. Instead, each writes down, privately:

- 81. One word for what I felt while listening.
- 82. One physical sensation I noticed.
- 83. One impulse I had — to interrupt, to help, to leave, to reassure.

These are then read aloud, without elaboration. Only then does the presenting coach speak, answering one question: **“What, if anything, in that is familiar?”**

The five-minute limit is essential. Longer presentations allow the coach to organize the material, and organized material transmits far less.

Exercise 5.3 — The Direction Test

Duration: 20 minutes. Journal.

Recall a supervision session in which a parallel was named. Then work the reverse hypothesis deliberately:

- 84. What was happening in my supervision relationship at that time, independent of the case?
- 85. Could the dynamic have originated *there* and traveled downward into the coaching?
- 86. What evidence would distinguish the two directions?

This exercise is uncomfortable for supervisors and is best done by them.

Exercise 5.4 — The Sculpt (Group)

Duration: 45 minutes. Requires a group of four or more.

A coach presents a case involving three or more people — the client and two others in their system. Group members are assigned, at random, to hold each position, including the coach’s. They do not role-play or improvise dialogue; they simply hold the position in mind for ten minutes while the case is discussed, and then report:

- What did it feel like to be in this position?
- What did I want, from here?
- Who did I feel connected to, and who did I feel cut off from?

The presenting coach listens and then responds to one question: *what did I hear that I did not know?* This exercise reliably surfaces the position in the client’s system that the coach has been unable to see — which, in most stuck cases, is the position she has been unconsciously occupying.

5.15 Inventory 5 — Parallel Process Screening

For use by a supervisor during or immediately after a supervision session, or by a coach reviewing supervision. Complete for a single case.

#	Screening question	Y / N / ?	Note
1	Did I feel something uncharacteristic during this session?		
2	Did I behave uncharacteristically — more directive, more silent, more careful?		
3	Was my thinking clear, or did I lose the thread?		
4	Was there a somatic change I can name?		
5	Did the supervisee's manner change when this case arose?		
6	Has this case been brought before without moving?		
7	Is there a structural echo (lateness, cancellation, over-run, extension)?		
8	Have I excluded my own state today?		
9	Have I excluded my ongoing relationship with this supervisee?		
10	Have I excluded one of my known complexes?		
11	Have I excluded a reasonable response to actual behavior?		
12	Do I have two independent instances, or only one?		
13	Which mechanism seems most likely — projective, identificatory, containment, role chain, or systemic?		
14	Could this be running downward from supervision rather than upward from the client?		
15	If I name it, what is my exact form of words?		
16	What would tell me I was wrong?		

Decision rule. If items 8 through 11 are not all answered *yes*, do not name a parallel; do the excluded work first. If item 12 is *only one*, wait. If item 16 is blank, you are holding a conviction rather than a hypothesis — return to Session Two and re-read the Dora warning.

5.16 Reflection Questions

87. Recall a supervision session that felt strange. Reconstruct it now with this session's framework. What might have been happening?
88. The evidence base for parallel process is weaker than its use suggests. Does that change how you will use it? Should it?
89. Doeberman found downward transmission as often as upward. If you supervise: what might be traveling from you into your supervisees' practice right now?

90. Mattinson said the reflection process appears where the practitioner is most stuck. What does that imply about how a supervisor should *frame* the naming?
91. Which of the five mechanisms feels most real to you, and which most speculative? What does your answer reveal about the tradition you have inherited?

References for Session Five

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SESSION SIX

In the Coaching Room

How the three phenomena actually appear in ordinary coaching — and exactly where to stop.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: Given everything in Sessions One through Five, what is a coach actually permitted to do with it — and how does she know when she has gone too far?

6.1 Why the Coaching Contract Changes Everything

Everything you have read so far was developed in a treatment relationship. Coaching is not one, and the differences are not cosmetic. Before we look at application, we must be precise about the frame we are applying it inside.

Dimension	Psychotherapy / analysis	Coaching
Contract	Treatment of distress or disorder; the past is explicitly in scope.	Development toward stated goals; the present and future are in scope.
Frequency	Often weekly or more; historically daily.	Typically fortnightly or monthly.
Duration	Months to years; open-ended.	Usually four to twelve months; bounded.
Regression	Deliberately permitted and sometimes cultivated.	Neither sought nor supported; the frame does not contain it.
Third party	Rarely; treatment is private.	Frequently — a sponsoring organization with its own interests.
Assumed state	The client may be unwell.	The client is assumed competent, resourceful, and whole.
Regulation	Licensed; statutory scope; formal complaint routes.	Self-regulated by professional bodies; credentialing rather than licensure.

Three of these deserve comment because they bear directly on the material of this book.

Frequency and duration limit what can safely be opened. A therapist who opens something difficult sees the patient again in four days. A coach who opens something difficult may not see the client for a month. That interval is the single most important practical constraint on how deep a coach may go, and it is rarely stated in coach training. **You must not open what you cannot close before the client leaves the room.**

The third party changes the transference landscape entirely. The client is not only relating to you; the client is relating to you-as-representative-of-the-organization-that-is-paying. Transference in coaching is very often not primarily parental at all. It is *institutional* — the client is relating to you as he relates to HR, to the board, to the appraisal system, to every previous process that promised development and delivered assessment. Coaches who look only for personal transference miss the dominant form.

The assumption of wholeness is a professional commitment, not an empirical claim. The ICF assumption that the client is creative, resourceful, and whole does not mean coaches never encounter wounded people. It means the coach *works from* that stance. This matters enormously for transference: the coach's job is to keep addressing the competent adult even when the client is momentarily relating from a much younger place. That is not denial. It is a deliberate and therapeutic choice of address.

6.2 Transference in the Coaching Room: The Actual Forms

Here is what it looks like in practice. I have organized these by the role the coach is cast in, because that is how a coach actually encounters them.

The Evaluating Authority

Presentation: The client reports rather than explores. Sessions have the quality of a progress review. He arrives with achievements. He apologizes for not having done the homework. He watches your face while speaking. When you ask an open question he answers as though it were a test.

What is happening: You have been assimilated to the appraisal system. Every professional relationship in this client's working life has been evaluative, and he has no template for a developmental relationship that is not.

The coaching risk: You will get a curated account of everything. The material that would actually be useful — the failures, the confusions, the thing he is embarrassed about — is systematically filtered out before it reaches you, and you will not know what you are not hearing.

What helps: Not reassurance — reassurance from an authority is still authority. What helps is structural: making the non-evaluative nature of the relationship *demonstrably* true rather than merely asserted. Declining to be told outcomes. Asking about the process rather than the result. Being visibly uninterested in whether he did well.

The Idealized Sage

Presentation: The client quotes you to others. She writes down what you say. She asks what you would do. Her language about the coaching is superlative. She refers to sessions as transformative, sometimes before anything has changed.

What is happening: Kohut's idealizing transference — the client draws strength from proximity to an idealized figure. In Jungian terms, an archetypal projection has landed on you. In prospective terms, a wisdom of her own is being kept in your safekeeping.

The coaching risk: This is the most dangerous form, for two reasons. First, it feels exactly like excellent coaching, and there is no internal signal distinguishing them. Second, it is self-sustaining: the coach is rewarded for behaving in ways that maintain it. Coaches with strong reputations are structurally more exposed to this and correspondingly less likely to have it challenged.

What helps: Small, deliberate, non-dramatic demonstrations of ordinariness. Saying "I don't know." Being wrong out loud and not making a production of it. And, most usefully, the returning question: *what would you have said to yourself about that if I weren't here?*

The Withholding Parent

Presentation: A negative transference. The client is subtly combative. He tests. He questions the value of the process. He is slightly late in a way that is never quite discussable. He responds to your questions with "well, that depends what you mean by..."

What is happening: You have been cast as someone who will withhold, disappoint, or control. The client is defending pre-emptively against an injury that has not occurred and, in his history, reliably did.

The coaching risk: You will experience this as a challenge to your competence and will respond by working harder — which confirms the transference, because working harder to win him over is exactly what a person does when they want something from you.

What helps: Stability and non-retaliation, sustained over time. And the smallest possible naming of what is present: "I notice we've been slightly at odds for the last twenty minutes. I'm not troubled by it. I am curious about it." Note the structure — observation, non-defence, curiosity. No interpretation whatever.

The Mirror

Presentation: The client brings achievements, and the session's energy depends noticeably on your response to them. When you do not respond with recognition, the client deflates or escalates. There is little genuine exploration; there is a great deal of narrative.

What is happening: Kohut's mirroring need. Extremely common at senior levels, where the client's position makes it impossible for anyone else in the organization to give recognition without it being read as politics.

The coaching risk: You become an audience. Sessions are enjoyable, well-attended, warmly reviewed, and developmentally inert.

What helps: Kohut's own answer is the right one — meet the need in measured degree rather than interpreting it away, and then let the ordinary small failures of recognition do their work. Practically: acknowledge genuinely and briefly, then move to the question that requires something of him.

The Rescuer

Presentation: Escalating dependency. Contact between sessions. Decisions deferred until the coaching conversation. Language of need: *I don't know what I'd do without these sessions.* Crises that arrive shortly before scheduled endings.

What is happening: The client has located their own agency in you. This may be characterological, or it may be situational — a person genuinely overwhelmed will regress temporarily, and that is not pathology.

The coaching risk: The coaching becomes the client's coping mechanism rather than a route to their own capacity, and ending becomes progressively harder. This is also the form most likely to indicate that a referral conversation is needed.

What helps: Structural firmness delivered warmly. Hold the boundaries of the contract without making the holding a rebuke. Return questions consistently. And attend carefully to the ending from the beginning — with dependent clients, the ending is the intervention.

The Peer or Sibling

Presentation: Easy collegiality. Shared references, shared humor, shared complaints about the organization. Sessions feel like an excellent conversation between equals.

What is happening: Kohut's twinship. Often mutually gratifying and therefore invisible — both parties are enjoying it.

The coaching risk: Collusion. Nothing is challenged, because challenge would breach the alliance. This is the transference most likely to produce a genuinely pleasant twelve-month engagement with no measurable outcome.

What helps: Deliberate, scheduled dissonance. If you have not disagreed with a client in three sessions, you are not in a coaching relationship. Note this one particularly if you coach people from your own professional background — pastors coaching pastors, executives coaching executives, coaches coaching coaches.

The Erotic Transference

Presentation: Ranges from mild attentiveness to explicit disclosure. Increased attention to appearance. Personal disclosure that escalates. Scheduling that drifts toward more informal settings or times.

What is happening: Freud's 1915 paper remains the best guidance available. The feeling is genuine; it is not about you as a person; and it must be neither gratified nor rejected.

The coaching risk: Obvious and severe. This is the situation in which coaches most often fail to seek supervision, precisely because it is embarrassing.

What helps: Immediate supervision — not eventually, immediately. A scrupulous return to formality in setting, timing, and medium, without any accompanying coldness that would humiliate the client. And a low threshold for concluding that the engagement should end and a referral be made. There is no professional credit available for managing this alone.

The Institutional Transference

Presentation: The client relates to you as an instrument of the organization. Guardedness about anything that could be reported. Careful phrasing. Questions about confidentiality that recur after they have been answered. Or the inverse: an assumption that you are a channel to power, and the coaching used to route messages upward.

What is happening: The transference is to the sponsor, and you are standing in front of it. This is the most common single form in organizational coaching and the least often recognized as transference at all, because it looks like reasonable political caution — and frequently is also reasonable political caution.

What helps: Explicit, repeated, and concrete contracting about confidentiality; behaviour that visibly matches it; and — crucially — declining to carry messages, even helpful ones, even once.

6.3 Countertransference in the Coaching Room: The Actual Forms

Now the other side. These are the coach-side patterns I encounter most often in supervision, with the questions that unlock them.

Pattern	How it shows up	The question that opens it
Rescuing	Working harder than the client. Preparing extensively. Thinking about the case between sessions. Relief when they do well.	Whose responsibility am I carrying, and when did I pick it up?
Boredom	Attention drifting. Clock-watching. Difficulty recalling the session afterwards.	What is absent from this room, and who took it out?
Irritation	A tight, impatient quality. Interrupting. Sharper questions than usual.	Is this objective (Winnicott) or mine (Fordham)?
Admiration	Enjoying the client's success. Quoting them. Feeling elevated by association.	What am I getting from this relationship, and does the client know?
Competitiveness	Subtle point-scoring. Wanting to be right. Noting where I would have done better.	What is this client stirring in my own ambition?
De-skilling	Feeling incompetent with one client while feeling fine with others.	Am I carrying the incompetence this client cannot hold?

Pattern	How it shows up	The question that opens it
Dread	Checking the diary with a sinking feeling. Hoping for a cancellation.	What am I anticipating, and has it actually happened yet?
Protectiveness	Softening challenges. Avoiding a topic. Managing their feelings.	What do I believe this client cannot survive — and is that belief theirs or mine?
The special client	Extra time, flexible boundaries, exceptions to my usual practice.	What need of mine is this client meeting?
Sleepiness	Genuine drowsiness in session with a specific client.	What is being deadened here, and who is doing the deadening?

Two of these warrant additional comment.

Sleepiness is worth taking seriously rather than treating as a personal failing. It is one of the most consistently reported somatic countertransferences in the clinical literature, and it very often accompanies material that has been drained of affect — a client speaking about something devastating in an entirely flat register. The deadness in the room is genuinely there. You are registering it accurately.

The special client is the pattern I would ask every reader to examine most carefully, because it is the common root of the majority of ethical failures in the helping professions. It rarely begins badly. It begins with a small, generous, defensible exception — running twenty minutes over, taking a call at the weekend, meeting somewhere more convenient. Each step is reasonable and each step makes the next one smaller. The reliable diagnostic is not the size of the exception but its *pattern*: **am I making exceptions for this client that I do not make for others, and would I be entirely comfortable describing every one of them to my supervisor this week?**

6.4 The Ladder of Intervention: What a Coach May Actually Do

Here is the operational core of this session. Given that you have noticed something, what are you permitted to do with it? I offer a ladder of five rungs. **Coaching lives on rungs one through three. Rung four is conditional. Rung five is outside the contract.**

Rung One: Notice and Hold

You register what is happening and do nothing with it in the session. You use it privately to inform your questions, your pacing, and your stance.

This is always available and is by far the most common correct answer. A great deal of what this book teaches is used entirely at this rung and never spoken aloud. The coach who notices that she has been recruited into the role of the never-disappointed authority, and who simply

begins — quietly, without announcement — to stop performing that role, has used the whole apparatus of this book without saying a word about it.

Rung Two: Adjust Your Own Behavior

You change what you are doing. You stop reassuring. You leave the silence. You decline the invitation to advise. You bring dissonance where there has been only warmth.

This is the workhorse rung. Most transference in coaching is best addressed not by discussing it but by declining to complete it. A pattern requires two parties. When you stop supplying your half, the pattern becomes visible to the client without anyone having to explain it.

Rung Three: Name What Is Present in the Room

You describe, in ordinary language and in the present tense, something occurring between the two of you — without interpretation and without reference to its origins.

Examples of legitimate rung-three interventions:

- “I notice that when I ask about what didn’t work, you move quite quickly to what did. I’m curious about that.”
- “Something just shifted in the room and I don’t know what it was. Did you feel it?”
- “I’m aware that I’ve been offering a lot of suggestions today, which isn’t usual for me. I wonder what’s going on between us.”
- “We’ve come back to this topic three times and each time we’ve moved away from it. What do you make of that?”

This is squarely within coaching. It is, in fact, precisely what the ICF competencies describe as maintaining presence and evoking awareness — noticing and sharing what is occurring in the moment. **It is one of the clearest behavioral differentiators between PCC-level and MCC-level practice.**

The rules for rung three are strict:

- 92. Present tense only.** What is happening now, not what it comes from.
- 93. Ordinary language only.** No clinical vocabulary, ever.
- 94. Own your half.** *I notice I...*, not only *you are...*
- 95. Offer, do not assert.** End with a question and be willing to be told you are wrong.
- 96. In service of the client’s stated agenda.** If it does not serve the contracted goal, it is your curiosity, not their coaching.

Rung Four: Connect the Pattern to the Client’s Wider System — Conditionally

You invite the client to consider whether what is happening between you has an analogue elsewhere in their working life.

“I notice we do this thing where I ask and you check my reaction before answering. Does that happen anywhere else?”

This is legitimate coaching *when* three conditions hold: the relationship is strong; the client has demonstrated the capacity to be reflective without becoming destabilized; and the connection serves the contracted goal. It is powerful, and it is the point at which many of the most valuable moments in coaching occur — because the client discovers a pattern *in vivo* rather than being told about one.

It is also the rung where coaches most often slip. The slip is small: from *does this happen elsewhere at work* to *where did you learn this*. The first is a pattern inquiry in the present. The second is a history inquiry, and it is rung five.

Rung Five: Interpret the Origin — Not Coaching

You tell the client where the pattern came from, or you invite exploration of its developmental origins.

“I wonder if the way you respond to me is connected to how you experienced your father.”

This is not coaching. It is a therapeutic intervention. It requires training you do not have from this book, a contract the client has not signed, a frequency the coaching does not provide, and containment the coaching frame cannot supply. It is outside the ICF definition of coaching and, depending on jurisdiction and presentation, may be outside your legal scope.

It is also — and coaches underestimate this — frequently *ineffective* even when accurate, because insight into origins without a containing relationship over time does not produce change. You will have impressed the client and altered nothing.

THE GOVERNING RULE

The Rule of the Threshold, in its full form.

You may use what you notice. You may not go and get more.

The test is directional. Ask: *is my next question moving toward the present and the client’s goal, or toward the past and the client’s formation?*

Toward the present: coaching. Toward the past: therapy.

This test can be applied in the half-second before you speak, which is the only place a professional boundary is any use at all.

6.5 The Six Red Lines

Beyond the ladder, six absolute limits. These are not judgment calls.

- 97. Never use clinical vocabulary with a client.** Not transference, not projection, not shadow, not complex, not countertransference. There is no situation in which this helps and several in which it harms.
- 98. Never invite the client into their childhood.** Not “tell me about your father,” not “when did you first learn that.” If the client volunteers history, you may receive it warmly and briefly and then return to the present. Receiving is not the same as inviting.
- 99. Never work with trauma material.** If trauma emerges — and it does, unannounced, in ordinary coaching sessions — you stabilize, you do not explore, and you refer. Section 6.7 covers how.
- 100. Never build a private formulation you have not tested.** An account of your client’s psychology that you hold privately and have never spoken to a supervisor is the most reliable precursor of harm in this domain.
- 101. Never cultivate the transference.** Do not do things to intensify the client’s attachment to you or to the process. The analytic tradition cultivates transference deliberately because it has the frame to work with what it produces. You do not.
- 102. Never disclose countertransference for your own relief.** Rung-three naming is for the client’s benefit and must be brief, owned, and in service of the work. “I’ve been finding these sessions difficult” said because you need to say it is a burden transferred to the client, who is paying you.

6.6 Contracting So That Rung Three Is Available

Much of the anxiety coaches feel about this material dissolves if the ground is prepared at the contracting stage. A single sentence in the initial conversation makes rung three available for the whole engagement without any of it feeling like a departure:

SUGGESTED CONTRACTING LANGUAGE

“One thing you should know about how I work: from time to time I’ll say something about what I notice happening between the two of us in the room — how a conversation is going, where I notice we get stuck, what I find myself doing. I do that because what happens between us is often a useful sample of what happens elsewhere. You should feel completely free to tell me I’ve got it wrong.”

That paragraph does four things at once: it normalizes present-moment observation, it explains why it is useful, it locates it inside the coaching purpose, and it explicitly authorizes the client to disagree. Coaches who contract this way report that rung-three interventions land as ordinary rather than as intrusion.

6.7 Referral: The Skill Nobody Teaches

At some point you will need to refer. This is not a failure and should not be conducted as one. But it is a skill, and it is done badly far more often than it is done well.

The Indicators

- The material is persistently historical rather than situational, and returns there regardless of contracting.
- The client is destabilized rather than stretched by the work — that is, they leave sessions less able to function rather than more.
- There are indications of clinical distress: significant sleep disturbance, described hopelessness, substance use as management, dissociation in session.
- The dependency is escalating despite consistent boundaries.
- You are out of your depth. This is a legitimate indicator on its own and requires no further justification.

How to Do It Well

The two errors are the abrupt hand-off (“I think this is beyond coaching — you should see someone”) and the endless deferral. Both are versions of the coach managing her own discomfort.

A workable structure:

- 103. Name it as scope, not as pathology.** “What you’re describing deserves more time and a different kind of container than coaching can offer. That’s about the shape of what I do, not about anything being wrong with you.”
- 104. Be specific about what the other work offers.** Vagueness reads as rejection. “A therapist can go where this seems to want to go, and can hold it week to week. I see you monthly, which isn’t the right rhythm for it.”
- 105. Offer names, not a category.** “Go and find a therapist” is a dismissal. Two or three actual referral options is a handover. Build this list *before* you need it.
- 106. Clarify what happens to the coaching.** Ending, pausing, or continuing in parallel are all legitimate. Say which you propose and why, and be open to the client’s view.
- 107. Do not disappear.** If the coaching continues alongside therapy, hold your scope cleanly. If it ends, end it properly with a closing session rather than a cancelled appointment.

6.8 Integration: The Three Phenomena and the Architecture of Resistance

Readers of *Resistance: The Gateway to Insight* will already have felt the connection, and it is worth making explicit because the two bodies of material are strongest together.

In that volume I argued that what presents as resistance is almost never obstinacy but *protection* — that behind an apparent refusal to change there is usually a competing

commitment being honored, and that the coach's task is to become curious about what the resistance is protecting rather than to overcome it.

Set that alongside this book, and three integrations follow.

First: transference is frequently the carrier of the competing commitment. A client committed to never being vulnerable before an authority will produce, with you, exactly the relationship that protects that commitment — pleasant, articulate, and impenetrable. What you are experiencing as transference and what he is experiencing as reasonable professional conduct are the same structure seen from two sides.

Second: the coach's countertransference is often the first sign that a competing commitment has been touched. Before the client says anything, the room changes. The pleasant conversation acquires a slight glassiness. You feel, faintly, managed. That feeling arrives before the content does, and it is the earliest available signal.

Third: the coach has competing commitments too. This is the part coaches skip. A coach committed to being experienced as helpful cannot afford a client's disappointment, and will therefore, reliably and unconsciously, avoid precisely the interventions that would produce it. That is not a technique problem. It is a countertransference problem in the strict Fordham sense — illusory, belonging to the coach, and invisible without a third party.

Which brings us, at the end of this session, to the argument for supervision — and to Sessions Seven and Eight.

6.9 Cautions From Session Six

- **Do not go up the ladder because you can.** Rung three is impressive and coaches enjoy using it. Rung one is correct far more often. The measure of skill here is restraint, not range.
- **Do not use rung three to avoid the ordinary coaching conversation.** “I notice something happening between us” can be a genuinely valuable intervention or a sophisticated way of not asking a difficult, concrete question about the client's actual behavior at work. Know which you are doing.
- **Do not confuse noticing with knowing.** You have hypotheses. You do not have findings. The client remains the authority on their own experience and is entitled to tell you that you have misread the room.
- **Do not carry this alone.** Every pattern in this session is one you cannot reliably see in yourself. That is not a character weakness; it is the structure of the phenomenon.
- **Do not let the framework replace the person.** The most sophisticated relational analysis in the world is worth less than actually liking your client and being interested in what they are trying to do with their life.

6.10 Practice Exercises

Exercise 6.1 — The Casting Audit

Duration: 45 minutes.

For every active client, identify which of the eight transference forms in section 6.2 best fits — or write “none apparent,” which is a legitimate and common answer. Then, for each identified form, note:

108. The specific evidence. Behaviors, not impressions.

109. The complementary position I have been taking.

110. The rung I have been working at.

111. The rung that would serve the client better.

Coaches typically find they are working at rung one where rung two would be more useful — noticing, but not yet declining to complete the pattern.

Exercise 6.2 — Drafting Rung Three

Duration: 30 minutes. Best with a partner.

Take three clients. For each, draft a single rung-three intervention in writing. Then test the draft against all five rules: present tense, ordinary language, owns your half, offered not asserted, serves the contracted goal.

Read each aloud to a partner whose only job is to answer: *how would that land if I were the client?* Most first drafts fail on rule three — they describe the client rather than the interaction.

Exercise 6.3 — The Exceptions Log

Duration: review of the last six months.

List every exception you have made to your standard practice in the last six months: over-runs, out-of-hours contact, fee variations, informal settings, extra sessions, unusual responsiveness. For each, note the client and the reason.

Then: are the exceptions distributed across your caseload, or concentrated? If concentrated, on whom — and what is that client giving you?

This is a short exercise with an outsized safety return. Take the results to supervision without editing them.

Exercise 6.4 — The Referral Rehearsal

Duration: 40 minutes. Requires a partner.

Role-play a referral conversation with a client who does not want to be referred and experiences it as rejection. Run it three times: once badly on purpose, once by the five-step structure in 6.7, and once with the partner playing a client who becomes upset.

Then debrief on one question only: *what did I feel in my body during the second and third runs?* The purpose of the exercise is not to script the words. It is to have felt the discomfort once before you feel it for real, so that the discomfort does not make the decision for you.

Exercise 6.5 — The Competing Commitment of the Coach

Duration: 40 minutes. Journal.

Complete these sentences, at length and without editing:

- If a client told me the coaching had been a waste of time, I would feel...
- The kind of coach I need to be seen as is...
- Therefore the intervention I most reliably avoid is...
- The clients most likely to benefit from that avoided intervention are...

The fourth line is the finding. It names, with uncomfortable precision, the clients your own commitments are currently short-changing.

6.11 Inventory 6 — The Coaching Boundary Audit

Purpose: to locate where your practice currently sits in relation to the threshold. Complete for your practice as a whole, not for a single client.

#	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1	I notice something in the relationship and use it silently to shape my questions.				
2	I change my own behavior in response to a pattern I have noticed.				
3	I name what is happening between us, in the present tense.				
4	I invite the client to consider whether the pattern appears elsewhere at work.				
5	I ask about the origins of a client's pattern in their earlier life.				
6	I use psychological vocabulary with clients.				
7	I hold a private theory about a client I have not told a supervisor.				
8	I make exceptions to my standard practice for particular clients.				

#	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
9	I contract explicitly for present-moment observation at the outset.				
10	I bring my own reactions to supervision as material rather than as confession.				
11	I have a current, specific referral list I could use this week.				
12	I disagree with clients.				

Reading Your Responses

- **Items 1–4** describe the legitimate ladder. A practice concentrated entirely at item 1 is under-using what it notices; a practice frequently at item 4 should ensure the conditions in 6.4 genuinely hold.
- **Items 5, 6, and 7** are the threshold items. *Sometimes* or *often* on any of them requires attention. Item 7 in particular: any answer other than *never* should go to your next supervision session.
- **Item 8** is the safety item. Concentration matters more than frequency — see Exercise 6.3.
- **Items 9–12** are the enabling conditions. A practice that scores low here is not equipped to use rungs three and four safely, whatever its intentions. Item 12 in particular: a coach who *rarely* or *never* disagrees with clients is, whatever else is true, not currently in a position to notice a collusive transference.

6.12 Reflection Questions

- 112.** Which of the eight transference forms are you most susceptible to completing? Which do you handle well?
- 113.** Where in the last month did you go up the ladder because it was interesting rather than because it served the client?
- 114.** What is your personal early-warning signal that you have accepted a role? Body, mood, or behavior?
- 115.** The Rule of the Threshold is directional — toward the present or toward the past. Where do you find that hardest to apply?
- 116.** Return to Inventory 1 from Session One. What has changed in how you would answer it now?
- 117.** Section 6.8 argues that the coach has competing commitments too. What is yours — and which client is currently paying for it?

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SESSION SEVEN

Eye Four: The Coach's Own Process

The mode everyone names, almost nobody works, and where the case usually turns.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: What is actually done in Mode Four — concretely, in words, in a real supervision session — and what makes it so difficult that most supervision skips it?

7.1 The Seven-Eyed Model in Full

Since this session and the next are built on it, and since I have promised to assume no prior knowledge, we begin with the whole model.

Peter Hawkins developed the Seven-Eyed Model in 1985; it was published with Robin Shohet in *Supervision in the Helping Professions* (1989) and extended to coaching and organizational consultancy with Nick Smith. It is the dominant supervision framework in the English-speaking world and, in my judgment, the best thing coaching supervision has been given by any adjacent discipline.

Its central insight is structural. There are, in any supervision, several distinct *systems* available to look at, and a supervisor can attend to any of them. The model names seven, and its practical power lies less in any individual mode than in the discovery — which nearly every supervisor makes on first encountering it — that they have been habitually working in two or three and neglecting the rest.

Mode	Focus	Characteristic question
One	The client and their situation — the content of the case.	What is actually going on for this client?
Two	The coach's interventions — strategies used and available.	What did you do, and what else might you have done?
Three	The relationship between coach and client.	What is the nature of the relationship between you?
Four	The coach's own internal process — feelings, images, associations, body, countertransference.	What is happening in you as you work with this person?
Five	The supervisory relationship, including parallel process.	What is happening between us right now, and what might it be a version of?
Six	The supervisor's own internal process.	What am I experiencing, and what is it telling me?

Mode	Focus	Characteristic question
Seven	The wider systemic context — organization, profession, culture, ethics.	What forces beyond this room are shaping what we are looking at?

A brief word on each of the modes we are not spending a session on, so the map is complete.

Mode One is where most supervision begins and where a great deal of it stays. Case content, client history, organizational context. It is necessary — you cannot supervise a case you do not understand — and it is also the mode in which supervision most easily becomes an interesting conversation about an absent person, with the coach’s actual practice never examined.

Mode Two is the skills mode: what did you do, what were the alternatives, what would you do differently. It is the natural home of normative supervision and of competency development, and it is where most credentialing-oriented mentor coaching lives. Its risk is that it converts every difficulty into a technique deficit.

Mode Three is the relationship mode, and it is the bridge to everything in this book. It looks at the alliance, the contract, the patterns of interaction, the ruptures and repairs. Transference is examined here — though not usually by that name.

Mode Five is where parallel process is *located*. Note carefully: located, not detected. The dynamic occurs in the supervisory relationship; it is usually *detected* through Mode Six, when the supervisor notices her own state. Sessions Seven and Eight therefore approach Mode Five from both sides.

Mode Seven is the systemic mode, and it is the one coaching supervision most often under-uses. The client sits in an organization; the coach sits in a commercial relationship with that organization; both sit in a professional culture and a wider society. A great deal of what presents as individual dynamics is systemic pressure arriving at the level where a person can feel it.

THE MAP

Where the three phenomena live in the model.

Transference — primarily Mode Three (the relationship), with its effects visible in Modes One and Two.

The coach’s countertransference — Mode Four. This is what Mode Four is.

Parallel process — occurs in **Mode Five**, is detected through **Mode Six**, and is understood by referring back to **Modes Three and Four**.

The supervisor’s countertransference — Mode Six.

A supervisor who does not work Modes Four, Five, and Six has, in effect, excluded this entire book from her practice.

7.2 What Mode Four Actually Is

Mode Four is the supervisor's attention to what is happening *inside the coach* in relation to this client. Its full territory:

- **Feelings** — during sessions, between sessions, on the way to sessions, on seeing the name in the diary.
- **Bodily experience** — tension, fatigue, restlessness, breath, the specific somatic signature this client evokes.
- **Images and associations** — spontaneous mental pictures, metaphors, memories, fragments of song, dreams about the client.
- **Impulses** — to rescue, to challenge, to withdraw, to impress, to end.
- **Fantasies** — what you imagine happening; how you imagine the engagement ending; what you would say if you could say anything.
- **What is activated of the coach's own** — the illusory countertransference, the complexes, the personal history this client touches.
- **What has been induced** — the syntonic countertransference, the state that belongs to the client's system and has arrived in the coach.

And a crucial clarification, because it is the most common confusion in supervision training: **Mode Four is not the coach's personal therapy.** The boundary is one of *purpose*. In Mode Four we go into the coach's inner experience **only as far as, and only for as long as, it serves the understanding of this client and this coaching relationship.**

The moment the exploration is being pursued for the coach's own healing rather than for the case, the supervision has become therapy, and the supervisor must name it and stop. This does not mean the coach is not affected — they very often are, deeply, and Mode Four work is frequently the most personally significant thing that happens in a coach's professional development. It means the *purpose* remains the work.

7.3 Why Mode Four Is Avoided

In a supervision-training group I have run repeatedly, I ask experienced supervisors to estimate what proportion of their supervision time is spent in each mode. The estimates cluster: roughly half in Modes One and Two, twenty percent in Mode Three, and single digits across Four, Five, Six, and Seven combined.

The avoidance has causes, and naming them is the first step to correcting it.

Cause One: Shame

The single biggest factor. Coaches inherited the Freudian framing described in Session Two — that a strong reaction to a client is evidence of insufficient development — without ever

inheriting the correction. So a coach who feels contempt for a client experiences that as a *disclosure of unfitness* rather than as clinical data.

Shame produces two visible behaviors in supervision, and every supervisor should learn to recognize them: **the pre-emptive apology** (“I know this is my stuff, but...”) and **the technical retreat** (converting a felt difficulty into a question about method). Both are requests to be excused from Mode Four, and both should be gently declined.

Cause Two: No Contract for It

Most supervision contracts are implicit about mode. The coach arrives expecting to discuss a case; the supervisor asks about the coach’s feelings; the coach experiences this as a change of subject and possibly as an intrusion. The problem is not the intervention. The problem is that it was never agreed to.

Cause Three: Supervisor Discomfort

Less often admitted. Mode Four work brings affect into the room, and affect in the room requires the supervisor to be able to hold it. A supervisor whose own capacity for containment is limited will — entirely unconsciously — keep the work in Modes One and Two, where everything can be discussed rather than felt.

This is a Mode Six issue and is dealt with in Session Eight. But note it here: **the reason a supervision stays in Mode One is often located in the supervisor, not the coach.**

Cause Four: The Credentialing Pull

Where supervision is entangled with credentialing — as it frequently is in coaching — the normative function crowds out the restorative and formative. A coach who believes she is being assessed will not disclose the material Mode Four requires, and she will be quite right not to. This is a structural problem in how coaching has organized supervision, and it is worth stating plainly: **supervision that is also assessment cannot do full Mode Four work.** Both functions are legitimate; they should be separately contracted and, where possible, separately held.

7.4 Contracting for Mode Four

Given all of the above, the contracting conversation carries most of the load. Here is language I use.

SUGGESTED SUPERVISION CONTRACTING LANGUAGE

“I want to say something about how I supervise, so that nothing I do later comes as a surprise.

Alongside the case itself — what’s happening for the client, what you’ve tried, what the options are — I’m going to ask you fairly regularly about *you*. What you feel with this person. What

happens in your body. What you notice on the way to the session. What you find yourself wanting to do.

I ask that for a specific reason, not out of curiosity about your inner life. Your reactions are one of the best instruments we have for understanding what is going on in a coaching relationship, and quite often they carry information that isn't available any other way.

Two things follow. First, none of that is evidence about your competence — in fact the coaches who bring the most of it are usually the ones doing the most demanding work. Second, you set the limit. If something goes further into your own life than you want to take it here, say so and we will stop; and if I think what has surfaced needs a different kind of attention than supervision, I will say that too."

That paragraph does the four things Mode Four requires: it announces the mode, it justifies it instrumentally, it de-shames it explicitly, and it establishes the boundary and who holds it.

7.5 Working Mode Four: Twelve Techniques

Now the practical core. These are ordered roughly from lightest to deepest. A supervisor should be able to work fluently in the first six and should use the later ones sparingly and with contract.

1. The Two-Word Check

"Two words for how you feel when you think about this client."

The constraint is the technique. Two words prevents explanation, and explanation is where coaches take cover. Coaches will resist — "it's complicated" — and the resistance is itself useful. Hold the constraint kindly.

2. The Somatic Scan

"Before we go on — where are you holding this in your body?"

Samuels's embodied countertransference, operationalized. The body is often the least-defended channel and frequently reports before the emotional vocabulary catches up. Ask early in the session rather than late; asked late, it becomes an intervention on a defended coach rather than a routine inquiry.

3. The Diary Question

"What happens in you when you see this client's name in your calendar?"

Deceptively powerful, because it bypasses the session itself. The anticipatory response is less curated than the in-session response and is often startlingly clear — coaches frequently report a physical drop, or a lift, that they have registered weekly for months without ever articulating.

4. The Role Question (Sandler)

"With this client, you've become the... what?"

Ask for a noun phrase. Then the two follow-ups that do the real work: *what invited that?* and *who else in the client's world plays that part?* This is the highest-yield single question in Mode Four and I would teach it before any other.

5. The Racker Sort

“Are you feeling what she feels, or are you feeling what people around her feel about her?”

Concordant or complementary. Coaches almost always know the answer immediately once the distinction is offered, and the answer determines what the coaching should do next. If concordant: the coach has access to the client's inner state and should consider how to reflect it. If complementary: the coach has access to the client's *impact*, which is very often the material the client most needs and has never received.

6. The Image Invitation

“If this coaching relationship were a place, or a weather system, or a piece of music — what would it be?”

Bypasses the analytic vocabulary entirely and reaches material that will not come out in propositional form. Coaches often produce something startlingly precise — *a waiting room, a very polite hostage negotiation, the last twenty minutes of a party*. Do not interpret the image. Ask what it is like to be in it.

7. The Uncharacteristic Test

“Is this how you usually feel, or is this particular to her?”

From Session One, applied by the supervisor rather than by the coach. It is the fastest available route to distinguishing baseline from signal, and it requires the supervisor to know the coach's baseline — which is one of several arguments for supervisory continuity over supervisory novelty.

8. The Absent Question

“What can't be said in that room?” or “What is the question you haven't asked her?”

Often the single most productive question in a stuck case. The coach usually knows the unasked question immediately, has known it for weeks, and has never said it aloud. The follow-up is *what stops you?* — and the answer to that is the countertransference.

9. The Sentence Completion

Give the stem and ask for a fast, unedited response:

- “With this client I am afraid that...”
- “What I want from this client is...”
- “If I really said what I thought, I'd say...”

- “What I’m protecting her from is...”
- “What this client won’t let me be is...”

Speed matters more than accuracy. Tell the coach that the first thing out is what you want, however wrong it sounds.

10. Speaking as the Client

“Would you speak for a couple of minutes as her — first person, as if you were her, talking about the coaching?”

A light empty-chair technique. It reliably surfaces material the coach holds but has not formulated — and, in cases where identification is running strong, it often produces a visible shift in the coach’s posture and voice that both parties can then discuss.

Requires contract and a coach who is comfortable with it. Debrief properly: *what was it like to be in there?* Do not leave a coach in the client’s position at the end of a segment.

11. The System Populate

Lay out objects, or simply name positions aloud, for the client, the client’s boss, key colleagues, the sponsor, and the coach. Then ask the coach: *where are you standing? Who are you closest to? Who can’t you see from there?*

This is a spatial version of the complementary-identification question and it works well with coaches who think visually. It also opens Mode Seven naturally, which is a useful side effect.

12. The Personal Resonance Inquiry — With Care

“Does anything about this remind you of anything in your own experience?”

This is the deepest legitimate Mode Four intervention and it must be handled with real discipline. Three rules:

118. Ask permission first. “I’d like to ask something more personal — is that all right?”

119. Take what is offered and do not press for more. The coach decides the depth. If they give a headline, work with the headline.

120. Return to the case explicitly. “So given that — what does it change about how you sit with her next week?” This return is what keeps it supervision.

If the material that surfaces is clearly larger than the case — unprocessed grief, live trauma, a current crisis — the supervisor’s job is to say so kindly and to recommend the coach’s own therapy. This is the supervisory equivalent of referral and is subject to exactly the same discipline as section 6.7.

7.6 The Supervisor’s Stance in Mode Four

Technique is the smaller part. The stance is the larger one, and four things govern it.

Normalize before you inquire. “Most coaches working with someone like this end up feeling something fairly strong. What’s yours?” The normalizing clause costs three seconds and removes most of the shame barrier.

Receive without flinching. When a coach discloses contempt, boredom, or attraction, the supervisor’s micro-response in the first half-second determines whether anything else will ever be disclosed. Any trace of surprise, distaste, or concern closes the channel permanently. This is not acting; it is the fruit of the supervisor having done her own work on the same material.

Do not rush to meaning. The impulse to explain what a feeling signifies is strong and usually premature. Stay with the feeling. Ask what it is like. Ask where else it appears. Meaning that arrives too quickly is generally the supervisor’s.

Always return to the client. Every Mode Four excursion must land back in the coaching. *So what does this mean for what you do on Tuesday?* Without that return, Mode Four becomes an interesting conversation about the coach — pleasant, insight-rich, and useless to the person paying for the coaching.

7.7 The Case Returns: Marcus and Dana in Mode Four

Return to Session One’s case. Here is what Mode Four work with Marcus might actually sound like. This is compressed; in practice it would take twenty-five minutes.

MODE FOUR IN PRACTICE

SUPERVISOR: Before we go further into what Dana’s doing — two words for how you feel in the room with her.

MARCUS: *(pause)* Warm. And... useful. Is that a feeling?

SUPERVISOR: It’ll do. Where do you feel the warm?

MARCUS: Chest, I suppose. It’s comfortable. These are easy sessions. I look forward to them.

SUPERVISOR: And when you see her name in the diary?

MARCUS: Genuinely pleased. She’s... she’s one of the good ones.

SUPERVISOR: With Dana, you’ve become the — what? Give me a noun.

MARCUS: *(long pause)* The one who isn’t disappointed in her.

SUPERVISOR: Say more.

MARCUS: She apologizes a lot. And every time she does, I — I get in there quickly. I tell her it’s fine. I told her the delegation thing hadn’t mattered, which — saying it now — isn’t true. It’s the whole contract.

SUPERVISOR: What invited that?

MARCUS: She’s very good at it. She apologizes before you can be annoyed. It’s... pre-emptive.

SUPERVISOR: Are you feeling what she feels, or what people around her feel about her?

MARCUS: *(pause)* The second. I think everyone around her is trying to reassure her. Her boss does it. Her team does it. I've seen it in the 360 and I didn't make anything of it.

SUPERVISOR: So what is the question you haven't asked her?

MARCUS: *(immediately)* What it would cost her if I were disappointed.

SUPERVISOR: How long have you known that was the question?

MARCUS: *(long pause)* Weeks.

SUPERVISOR: What stops you?

MARCUS: *(pause)* I don't want to be the one who does that to her.

Look at what that exchange produced in about four minutes of transcript.

- The **role** was named — the one who isn't disappointed — by Marcus rather than by the supervisor.
- The countertransference was sorted as **complementary**, which immediately connected it to the 360 data and made it a *finding about Dana's system* rather than a private feeling of Marcus's.
- The **unasked question** surfaced instantly, having been available for weeks.
- The **coach's own material** appeared in the last line, unprompted, and now sits available for the supervisor to decide how far to take.

And notice what the supervisor did *not* do. No interpretation. No theory offered. No reference to Marcus's history until Marcus went there himself. Eleven short questions, most of them under twelve words.

The Return

The final and essential move: "*So — what do you do on Tuesday?*"

Marcus does not need to interpret Dana's apologizing. He needs to stop completing the pattern. Rung two, from Session Six. The next time Dana apologizes, he might simply not reassure — might instead say, mildly: "*I notice you apologize to me quite often. I'm curious what you think would happen if you didn't.*" Present tense. Ordinary language. In service of the contracted goal, which was, and has been all along, delegation — a behavior Dana cannot perform because it requires her to tolerate someone else's disappointment.

That is the whole arc: an unspeakable dynamic, transmitted into supervision, surfaced through the coach's own experience, and converted into a single ordinary sentence available next Tuesday.

7.8 Cautions From Session Seven

- **Mode Four is not therapy, and the difference is purpose.** Test it constantly: is this in service of the case? When the answer becomes no, stop, name it, and if necessary recommend the coach's own therapy.
- **Do not fish.** A supervisor who repeatedly probes a coach's personal material without contract is abusing the power of the role. The coach controls the depth.
- **Do not make Mode Four the only mode.** A supervisor who has discovered its power will over-use it. Some cases are Mode One cases. Some difficulties are genuine skill gaps and require Mode Two, delivered plainly. Reframing a competence issue as countertransference is a failure of supervisory courage.
- **Watch the credentialing entanglement.** If you are also assessing this coach, say so, and recognize that full Mode Four work is compromised. Do not pretend otherwise.
- **Return every time.** Mode Four without the return is a good conversation and a wasted hour.

7.9 Practice Exercises

Exercise 7.1 — The Mode Audit

Duration: 30 minutes. Materials: recording or detailed notes of one supervision session.

Review a supervision session in three-minute segments. Code each segment by mode, One through Seven. Then total.

Compare your actual distribution to your intended one. Nearly every supervisor doing this for the first time discovers that Modes Four through Seven together account for less than a fifth of the session, and that the shift into Mode One after a Mode Four opening happened within ninety seconds and was initiated by the supervisor.

Exercise 7.2 — The Twelve Techniques Rehearsal

Duration: 90 minutes. Requires a partner. Best run in three thirty-minute rounds.

One partner presents a live case; the other supervises using **only** the twelve Mode Four techniques from 7.5 — no Mode One questions permitted, no advice, no strategy. Then swap.

The prohibition is the point. Supervisors discover how strong the pull to Mode One is, and how much is available without it.

Debrief on three questions: which technique opened the most? Which felt intrusive, and why? Where did the supervisor retreat to safer ground, and what preceded the retreat?

Exercise 7.3 — The Unasked Question Inventory

Duration: 30 minutes. Journal.

For every active client, complete: "The question I have not asked this client is..."

Then, for each, complete: “What stops me is...”

The first column is a list of your coaching’s missing content. The second is a map of your countertransference. Take the whole thing to supervision.

Exercise 7.4 — Receiving Without Flinching

Duration: 45 minutes. Requires a partner. For supervisors.

The partner discloses, one at a time and in a deliberately flat delivery, a series of difficult countertransference statements — real or invented. For example: *I find this client physically repellent. I am bored to the point of dread. I think he’s a fraud. I look forward to her sessions more than I should. I hoped he would cancel and he did and I was delighted.*

The supervisor’s only task is to respond, out loud, within two seconds — and then both parties examine the response. Not the content of it: the *quality* of it. Was there a flinch? A reassurance? A hurry to normalize? A note of clinical interest?

This is uncomfortable and it is the single most valuable supervisor-development exercise in this book. The half-second is where supervision is actually won or lost.

7.10 Inventory 7 — Mode Four Readiness

Two parts. Part A for coaches receiving supervision; Part B for supervisors. Complete whichever applies — or both.

Part A — For the Coach

#	Statement	Rating (1–5)
1	I bring my feelings about clients to supervision without apologizing for them.	
2	I have told my supervisor something about a client I found embarrassing.	
3	I can name what happens in my body with at least three current clients.	
4	I would tell my supervisor if I were attracted to a client.	
5	I would tell my supervisor if I disliked a client.	
6	My supervision contract explicitly covers work on my own responses.	
7	I do not believe my supervisor is assessing me.	
8	I have my own therapy, or would seek it if supervision surfaced something larger.	
9	I know my characteristic role — the position clients most easily recruit me into.	
10	There is nothing about a current client I am actively not saying in supervision.	

Item 10 is the whole inventory. Any answer below 4 identifies the exact content of your next supervision session.

Part B — For the Supervisor

#	Statement	Rating (1–5)
1	I contract explicitly for Mode Four work at the start of every supervisory relationship.	
2	I ask about the coach's body in most sessions.	
3	I can receive a disclosure of dislike, attraction, or contempt without visible reaction.	
4	I normalize before I inquire.	
5	I return every Mode Four excursion to the client and the next session.	
6	I know when I am fishing, and I stop.	
7	I distinguish clearly between a skill gap and a countertransference difficulty.	
8	I say plainly when I am also assessing, and I hold the two apart.	
9	I have my own supervision in which my Mode Six material is worked.	
10	My supervisees have told me difficult things about themselves.	

Item 10 is the outcome measure. If your supervisees have not told you difficult things, the reason is in your practice, not in theirs — and it is very likely located in items 3, 4, or 8.

7.11 Reflection Questions

- 121.** What proportion of your supervision is spent in Mode Four? What proportion would you want, and what stops it?
- 122.** What have you never told a supervisor? What would have to be true for you to tell them?
- 123.** If you supervise: recall the last time a supervisee disclosed something difficult. What did you actually do in the first two seconds?
- 124.** Which of the twelve techniques would you find hardest to use, and what does that suggest?
- 125.** Marcus knew the unasked question for weeks. What is yours, and how long have you known it?

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SESSION EIGHT

Eye Six: The Supervisor's Own Process

The instrument at the top of the chain — and who calibrates it.

SESSION OPENING

The question this hour exists to answer: If the coach's inner experience is data, then so is the supervisor's. What is a supervisor to do with her own reactions — and who is watching her?

8.1 What Mode Six Is

Mode Six is the supervisor's attention to her own here-and-now experience while supervising, and her use of that experience as information about the whole system — the supervisory relationship, the coaching relationship, the client, and the wider context.

It is the smallest mode in most supervision practice and the largest in consequence, for a simple structural reason: **it is the last instrument in the chain, and there is nothing above it inside the session.** The coach's countertransference can be examined by the supervisor. The supervisor's countertransference can be examined only by the supervisor — in the moment — or by her own supervisor, later.

That asymmetry is the central fact of this session. Everything else follows from it.

8.2 Where the Supervisor's Reactions Come From

A supervisor sitting in a session may be reacting to any of six distinct sources, and telling them apart is the whole discipline of Mode Six.

Source	Description	Diagnostic clue
1. Her own life	The supervisor's state today — tiredness, preoccupation, illness, a difficult morning.	Present across multiple sessions today, not specific to this supervisee.
2. Her own complexes	The supervisor's history activated by this material — Fordham's illusory countertransference at the supervisory level.	Matches a known theme from her own inventory; recurs across supervisees with similar material.
3. The supervisory relationship	A genuine response to this supervisee — their competence, their manner, their stage of development, the history between them.	Specific to this supervisee; consistent across different cases they bring.
4. Parallel process from the coaching	The reflected dynamic — the client-coach relationship arriving in the room.	Specific to this case; appears when this case is discussed and lifts when it is not.

Source	Description	Diagnostic clue
5. The client, directly	A response to the client as described — the supervisor's reaction to a person she has never met.	Arises during description rather than during interaction; often a moral or aesthetic response.
6. The wider system	The organizational or professional context making itself felt — commercial pressure, credentialing anxiety, cultural dynamics.	Shared across several supervisees; correlates with context rather than person.

The practical procedure, and it takes about eight seconds once practiced, is to run down this list in order. **Sources one through three must be excluded before source four is entertained.** A supervisor who reaches for parallel process without first checking her own morning is not reading an instrument; she is projecting.

Source five deserves a note. Supervisors sometimes have strong reactions to clients they have never met — dislike, sympathy, moral disapproval — based entirely on the coach's account. This is worth attending to because the account is itself shaped by the coach's countertransference. A supervisor who finds herself disliking an absent client should ask: *what version of this person have I been given, and why that version?*

8.3 The Supervisor's Shadow

This is the section of the book I would most want an experienced supervisor to read, and it is the one I have found hardest to write about my own practice.

Guggenbühl-Craig's argument from Session Three applies with double force to supervision. The supervisor occupies the top of a hierarchy of expertise, is consulted rather than consulting, and is structurally protected from challenge. That is fertile ground, and the following are what grows in it.

Grandiosity

The belief that one knows what is happening with a client one has never met. Parallel process supplies a particularly seductive vehicle for this, because it converts a feeling into apparent knowledge and is essentially unfalsifiable in the moment.

The tell: your formulations are usually right, and rarely revised. Supervisors who are frequently wrong and say so are in better shape than supervisors who are frequently right.

The Need to Be Useful

The most common and most benign-seeming. The supervisor needs the session to be valuable, needs the supervisee to leave with something, needs to have contributed. And so she offers — and offers — and the supervisee's own thinking is quietly crowded out by a more experienced person's better ideas.

The tell: you talk more than a third of the time. Or: you feel a small dip when a supervisee resolves something without your help.

Competitiveness

Rarely admitted and not rare. A supervisor watching a talented supervisee describe skilful work may experience something with a faint edge to it — particularly a supervisee who is younger, better credentialed, better paid, or working with more prestigious clients.

The tell: a small pleasure at a supervisee's difficulty. A tendency to find the gap in an account of successful work.

Seduction by the Interesting Case

The supervisor becomes absorbed in the client's material — which is genuinely fascinating — and the supervisee's development disappears from the session entirely. Two clinicians enjoying a case, with a coach in the room who is not being supervised.

The tell: you could describe the client in detail and the coach's practice hardly at all.

Collusion

The supervisory relationship becomes comfortable. Both parties like it. Challenge would cost something. And so the difficult observation goes unmade for months.

The tell: you cannot remember the last time you said something the supervisee did not want to hear. Note that this is the twinship transference from Session Six, occurring one level up.

Avoidance of the Normative

The supervisor who is temperamentally restorative and formative will avoid the normative function — the ethical and competence dimension — because it disrupts the relationship. This is the failure mode with the greatest potential for public harm, because the normative function is the one that protects clients.

The tell: you have never told a supervisee that something they did was wrong.

WHY SUPERVISORS NEED SUPERVISION

The uncomfortable summary. Every one of these six is a countertransference. Not one of them will be visible to you from inside your own practice. They are visible to (a) your supervisees, who will not tell you, and (b) your own supervisor, if you have one.

Which is the argument of section 8.7, and the reason it is not optional.

8.4 Working Mode Six: The Internal Discipline

Mode Six is worked mostly in silence, in real time, while doing something else. Here is the sequence.

Step One: Maintain a Second Channel

The supervisor listens on two channels at once: to the supervisee, and to herself. This is a trainable capacity and it develops slowly — most supervisors report that it takes two or three years of deliberate practice before the second channel runs without effort.

A practical scaffold for those developing it: at three fixed points in every session — roughly ten minutes, twenty-five minutes, and forty minutes — take four seconds to ask internally: *what am I feeling, what is my body doing, what do I want to do right now?* The fixed points prevent the check from becoming an anxious hyper-monitoring, which is its own failure mode.

Step Two: Run the Source Check

Sources one through three, in order, before anything else. This is Searles's discipline and it is non-negotiable.

Step Three: Decide Whether to Disclose

The critical judgment. Not everything noticed should be said. Four tests, all of which must pass:

126. Is it for the supervisee, or for me? Am I about to speak in order to discharge something, to demonstrate perceptiveness, or to relieve my own discomfort? If any of those, be silent.

127. Is it timely? Does the supervisee have the capacity, right now, to receive this? A coach in the middle of a difficult disclosure does not need the supervisor's parallel observation.

128. Is it proportionate? A small observation should be offered small.

129. Can I say it without asserting knowledge I do not have? If not, do not say it yet.

Step Four: Disclose in the Right Grammar

The rules from Session Five apply, with one addition specific to Mode Six. Own it in the first person; mark the uncertainty; end with a question. And: **do not require the supervisee to make it useful.** If you offer an observation and the supervisee says it does not resonate, receive that as information and move on. A supervisor who presses her observation until it is accepted has converted Mode Six into an exercise of power.

Step Five: Log What You Did Not Say

The most under-practiced discipline in supervision. After each session, write briefly: *what did I notice and not disclose, and why?*

Over months this log becomes the most valuable document in a supervisor's development, because the pattern of what you consistently withhold is a precise map of your own avoidances. Supervisors who keep it typically discover a category — anger, attraction, doubt about competence, boredom — that they never bring up with anyone.

8.5 The Case Returns Once More: The Supervisor's View

Marcus and Dana, from the supervisor's side.

MODE SIX, LIVE

The supervisor's internal account, reconstructed.

Minute ten. I like him. That's not new — I've always liked him. But I notice I'm being unusually gentle. I have offered a frame and he received it warmly and we moved on, and I let that happen.

Minute twenty-five. I have now offered three things. He has appreciated all three. We have landed on none. I notice a small reluctance to point this out. That reluctance is not characteristic of me with him.

Source check. Am I tired? Mildly, but I was sharp with the supervisee before him. Is this one of my complexes? Approval is on my list — possible, hold it. Is this the relationship between us generally? No — I challenged him firmly six weeks ago on a different case, and it was fine.

Minute forty. Fourth offering. Fourth warm reception. And now he is bringing something new and genuinely interesting, and I notice I want to follow it, and I notice that following it would be the fifth time.

Two independent instances: the pattern of offering-and-not-landing, and my own uncharacteristic reluctance to name it. That is enough.

And the disclosure:

THE NAMING

SUPERVISOR: Marcus, I want to stop and say something about me rather than about Dana. In the last forty minutes I've offered you four different things. You've received every one of them warmly. And we haven't landed on any of them. I also notice I've been oddly reluctant to point that out — which isn't like me with you. I don't know what that is. Does any of it sound familiar?

MARCUS: *(long pause)* That's the sessions with Dana. That's exactly the sessions with Dana.

Note the construction, phrase by phrase, because it is a model:

- “*something about me rather than about Dana*” — announces the mode and removes any implication of accusation.
- “*I've offered you four things... we haven't landed*” — observable behavioral fact, checkable, not interpretive.
- “*I've been oddly reluctant... which isn't like me with you*” — the uncharacteristic test, applied to herself and shared.
- “*I don't know what that is*” — the uncertainty, marked explicitly.
- “*Does any of it sound familiar?*” — genuine question, with room for “no.”

And then the discipline that Session Five demanded: **do not stop at the recognition.** The remaining twenty minutes go to *what is it like to be in that position with her; what has it cost*

you; what is the smallest thing you could do differently on Tuesday; what will make that hard.

8.6 Mode Six in Group Supervision

In group supervision the supervisor's Mode Six work becomes more complex and more important, because she is monitoring three things at once: her own state, the group's state, and the relationship between them.

Three specific tasks.

First, track the distribution. As described in Session Five, a group frequently distributes a client's system across its members. The supervisor's Mode Six question becomes: *what am I holding, and what has been allocated to whom?* The supervisor often finds she is holding the position nobody else will take — which is diagnostic in itself.

Second, notice your own preferences. Supervisors have favorites in a group, find some members easier, and give unequal attention. This is human and it is also a live intervention in the group's dynamics. A supervisor who does not track it will find her preferences replicated in who speaks and who does not.

Third, manage disclosure differently. A Mode Six disclosure in a group is a public act with effects on every member, not just the presenter. It should be smaller, more tentative, and more clearly framed as one datum among several: "I notice something in myself that I want to add to what others have said — it may be mine."

8.7 Who Supervises the Supervisor?

We arrive at the structural conclusion of the whole book.

The argument runs like this. The coach cannot reliably see her own countertransference; therefore she needs a supervisor. The supervisor cannot reliably see *her* own countertransference; therefore she needs one too. The regress does not terminate in a person who has finally achieved transparency. It terminates in an institution.

THE STRUCTURAL ARGUMENT

There is no level of experience at which a practitioner becomes able to see her own unconscious process unaided.

This is not a claim about individual development. It is a claim about the *structure* of the phenomenon. What is unconscious is, by definition, not available to introspection. More experience makes you better at recognizing the *patterns* you have already had named for you. It does not give you access to the ones you have not.

An MCC with twenty-five years of practice and a supervision qualification has exactly the same structural blindness as a novice. She has a much better map, and the same blind spot.

The professional consequences are three, and I would state them as requirements rather than recommendations.

130. Every supervisor must have supervision of her supervision. Not peer conversation, though that has value. Contracted supervision in which her own Mode Six material is the agenda. In much of the European supervision tradition this is assumed; in coaching it is patchy, and the patchiness is a genuine professional risk.

131. Supervisors should have their own therapy available. Not necessarily continuously. But a supervisor who has never been on the receiving end of a process that examined her without deference is missing an experience that matters.

132. Supervisors should be routinely challengeable by supervisees. This must be contracted explicitly, because the power asymmetry will otherwise silence it. “If you think I’ve got something wrong, or that something between us is off, I want to hear it — and I will not be gracious about it and then quietly hold it against you.” Saying the second half matters more than saying the first.

8.8 The Ethical Dimension

One matter of professional ethics that this material raises and that is not adequately addressed anywhere in the coaching codes.

The client is not in the room, and cannot consent to what happens there. When a supervisor forms a view of a client through her own countertransference, that view may travel back into the coaching and shape how the client is treated — by a coach who has been influenced by a person the client has never met, about material the client never disclosed.

This is not an argument against supervision. It is an argument for three specific disciplines:

- **Hypothesis language throughout.** Never let a supervisory formulation harden into a fact about a person who cannot answer.
- **Test in the coaching, not in supervision.** Whatever is generated in supervision must be checked against the client’s own experience, in the room, in a form the client can accept or reject.
- **Contract for supervision with clients.** Coaching clients should be told, in ordinary terms, that the coach takes her work to supervision, what that means, and what protects their confidentiality. Most coaches do this in a sentence in the contracting conversation. Every coach should.

8.9 Cautions From Session Eight

- **Do not disclose reflexively.** Mode Six is mostly internal. Most of what you notice should shape your questions, not become your speech.

- **Do not use the supervisee to process your own material.** If your reaction is genuinely yours, take it to your own supervision. The supervisee is not a resource for your development.
- **Do not confuse Mode Six with authority.** “I feel X, therefore Y is true” is not sound at any level of seniority. Feeling is data. Data is not conclusion.
- **Do not let the restorative crowd out the normative.** A supervisor who has become fluent in this material may find ethics conversations crude by comparison. They are not. They are the ones that protect clients.
- **Do not work without your own supervision.** Everything in this session is unavailable to a supervisor working alone — not difficult, unavailable.

8.10 Practice Exercises

Exercise 8.1 — The Withheld Log

Duration: eight weeks. Materials: dedicated notebook.

After every supervision session for eight weeks, write three lines:

- 133.** What did I notice in myself?
- 134.** What did I disclose?
- 135.** What did I withhold, and why?

At eight weeks, review the third column only. Sort into categories. The largest category is your supervisory blind spot, and it belongs at the top of the agenda in your own supervision.

Exercise 8.2 — The Source Check Drill

Duration: four weeks, in-session.

For four weeks, whenever you notice a reaction in supervision, run the six sources from 8.2 explicitly and write down which one you concluded and on what basis. Do not skip the writing.

Most supervisors discover they have been attributing to source four (parallel process) reactions that on inspection belong to source one (their own day) or source three (the supervisory relationship). This exercise has a measurable effect on the accuracy of Mode Six disclosure.

Exercise 8.3 — The Shadow Interview

Duration: 60 minutes. Requires a trusted peer who supervises.

Each partner answers the following aloud, at length, while the other listens without comment and then asks only “what else?” three times:

- Which supervisee do I most enjoy, and what am I getting from them?
- Which do I find hardest, and what is it about?

- When did I last feel a small satisfaction at a supervisee's difficulty?
- When did I last talk more than a third of a session?
- What have I never said to a supervisee that I probably should have?
- What would my supervisees say about me if they could say it without consequence?

The last question is the one that matters and the one people rush. Sit in it.

Exercise 8.4 — Soliciting the Challenge

Duration: one session with each supervisee.

Ask each supervisee, directly and having warned them a session in advance so they can prepare: **“What do I do in supervision that doesn’t work for you? And what do you not bring here?”**

Then — and this is the whole exercise — respond with nothing but acknowledgment. No explanation, no context, no defence. “Thank you. I’m going to sit with that.”

Take everything you hear to your own supervision before responding substantively to any of it.

8.11 Inventory 8 — The Supervisor’s Mode Six Audit

The most demanding instrument in this book. Complete it honestly or not at all; a flattering result is worse than no result.

#	Statement	Rating (1–5)
1	I run a second channel on myself during supervision sessions.	
2	I exclude my own state and my own complexes before attributing a reaction to the case.	
3	I disclose my own experience only when it serves the supervisee.	
4	I can be told my observation does not resonate, and let it go.	
5	I keep a record of what I notice and do not say.	
6	I talk less than a third of the time.	
7	I have named a supervisee’s ethical or competence failure directly in the last year.	
8	I know which supervisee I most enjoy, and why.	
9	I am aware of competitive feelings toward supervisees and have examined them.	
10	I have my own contracted supervision of supervision.	
11	I have explicitly invited my supervisees to challenge me.	
12	A supervisee has challenged me in the last six months.	

#	Statement	Rating (1–5)
13	I hold my formulations about absent clients as hypotheses.	
14	I have been wrong in supervision and said so.	
15	I would notice if I were becoming grandiose.	

On items 11 and 12. These form a pair, and the gap between them is the finding. A supervisor who has invited challenge (11 high) but not received it (12 low) has issued the invitation in a form that was not believed. That is worth more attention than any other result on this page.

On item 15. The correct answer is a low number. A supervisor confident she would notice her own grandiosity has demonstrated the difficulty. If you rated this 4 or 5, read section 8.3 again.

8.12 Reflection Questions

- 136.** Which of the six supervisor shadow forms in section 8.3 is most alive in you? What is the evidence?
- 137.** What do you consistently withhold from your supervisees? What would it take to say it?
- 138.** The regress terminates in an institution, not a person. What institutional support does your own practice currently have, and where is it thin?
- 139.** Who currently has permission to tell you that you are wrong — and have they used it?
- 140.** Return to Inventory 1 from Session One and Inventory 3 from Session Three. Complete them again now. What has moved?

CLOSING

What You Are Left With

A short conclusion to eight hours.

We began in a doorway, four seconds after entering a room where two people had been arguing. I want to end there too.

Nothing in this book has given you a capacity you did not already possess. You have always been affected by the people you sit with. You have always registered more than you could articulate. Every coach who has ever left a session with an inexplicable heaviness, or an unaccountable lift, or the sense that something happened which was never spoken — every one of them has been reading this data for their entire career.

What the eight sessions have added is three things, and only three.

A vocabulary. You can now name what you are noticing. Transference, countertransference, concordant and complementary, role responsiveness, parallel process, the illusory and the syntonetic. These are not decorations. A phenomenon that cannot be named cannot be brought to another person, and a phenomenon that cannot be brought to another person cannot be examined.

A discipline. The uncharacteristic test. The source check. Convergence across independent instruments. Hypothesis rather than conclusion. The requirement that every excursion return to the client. These are what separate a professional use of subjective experience from an amateur one, and they are the difference between perceptiveness and self-indulgence.

A boundary. The Rule of the Threshold. You may use what you notice; you may not go and get more. The ladder of intervention, and the honest recognition that rungs one and two do most of the work. The six red lines. The referral that is made well rather than made late.

If you take only one thing from these eight hours, I would want it to be this. Freud held the key in 1912 and dropped it — wrote the surgeon and the telephone receiver five paragraphs apart, and spent the rest of his life pursuing the wrong one. It took his profession forty years to go back and pick up what he had left.

Coaching is at that fork now. We have a professional culture that speaks a great deal about presence and partnership and the coach's use of self, and which in practice still treats the coach's emotional response as something to be managed rather than read. We supervise in Modes One and Two, and name Modes Four, Five, and Six on the training slide.

The instrument is sitting in every coaching room in the world, switched on, generating data continuously. The only question is whether we are going to learn to read it — with discipline, with humility, and with a clear sense of the edge of our competence.

“The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”

— C. G. Jung

You have never been outside the reaction. You have only, until now, been outside the noticing.

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APPENDIX A

The Markers as a Relational Specification

Transference, countertransference, and parallel process across the ACC, PCC, and MCC standards.

PLEASE READ FIRST

A note on sources and copyright. The ICF Core Competencies and the ACC, PCC, and MCC assessment standards are the copyrighted property of the International Coaching Federation. **The marker text is not reproduced in this book.** Markers are referred to here by number and by a brief functional description in my own words, and the analysis that follows is my own.

Readers should work with this appendix alongside the current official publications, downloaded directly from the ICF: the *ICF Core Competencies*, the *PCC Markers*, the *PCC Assessor Resource Guide*, and the *Minimum Skills Requirements* documents for each credential level. Those documents are revised periodically. Where anything here conflicts with the current official text, the official text governs.

Nothing in this appendix is issued or endorsed by the ICF, and nothing in it should be read as an authoritative statement of what an assessor will conclude.

A.1 The Argument of This Appendix

In Session One I made a claim in passing and promised to return to it. Here it is, stated properly:

THE CLAIM

The ICF marker set is, among other things, a behavioral specification for disciplined management of the relational field.

It was not designed as one. Its authors were not writing about transference. But if you ask what behaviors would be observable in a coach who was consistently *not* captured by the relational dynamics of the room — not cast, not colluding, not rescuing, not performing — you would arrive at something very close to the marker set.

This is not a mystical reading. It follows from what the markers actually require. Consider what is being asked across the set: that the agenda belong to the client and not the coach; that the coach follow the client's language rather than substituting her own; that observations be offered without attachment; that the coach permit silence; that the client do most of the talking; that learning be elicited rather than supplied; that the coach respond to who the client is and not only to what the client is working on.

Now ask what each of those requirements is protecting against. Agenda drift protects against the coach's needs entering the work. Following the client's language protects against premature

formulation. Offering without attachment protects against the coach requiring her contribution to be accepted. Silence protects against the coach's anxiety filling the space. The client doing most of the talking protects against the coach's expertise crowding out the client's thinking.

Every one of those is a countertransference safeguard. The marker set is a list of the behaviors that survive when the coach is not being run by the relationship.

This has two consequences, and they are the practical value of this appendix.

141. Marker failures are frequently relational, not technical. A coach who repeatedly misses Marker 5.5 does not usually need to be told that silence is valuable. She knows. Something is making silence intolerable in that room. Training her on the marker will not fix it. Supervision might.

142. A recurring marker pattern is diagnostic information about the coach's countertransference profile. The markers a coach reliably misses form a signature, and that signature is usually readable.

A.2 How to Use This Appendix

Each marker below is treated in a consistent four-part format:

- **Function** — a one-line paraphrase of what the marker asks the coach to do.
- **Transference pressure** — how the client's casting of the coach makes this marker harder to demonstrate.
- **Countertransference failure** — the coach-side dynamic that most commonly causes this marker to be missed.
- **Recovery** — what a coach can actually do, in the room, to restore the marker.

Three ways to work with this material.

As a mentor coach or supervisor: when a mentee misses a marker in three consecutive recordings, do not re-teach the marker. Look it up here, take the countertransference entry, and open it as a supervision question. You will usually find the actual obstacle within ten minutes.

As a candidate preparing for assessment: identify your three weakest markers from mentor feedback. Read only those entries. Then complete Exercise A.1 at the end of this appendix, which converts them into a personal countertransference profile.

As a working coach with no exam in view: read the master table in A.13 and mark the six markers you are least reliable on. That column is a portrait of your own relational habits, and it is more useful than any inventory in this book because it is built from observable behavior rather than self-report.

A.3 ACC, PCC, MCC: The Progression in Relational Terms

The three credential levels are usually described in terms of skill depth. There is a second, less-discussed way to describe them, and it maps precisely onto the material of this book.

Level	Conventional description	Relational description
ACC	Demonstrates the competencies. Coaching is recognizable as coaching.	The coach is not yet aware of the field. Attention is largely on her own performance — what question comes next, whether she is doing it right. Transference is operating and is invisible to her. Countertransference is experienced as fact about the client (“she’s resistant”) rather than as data about the relationship.
PCC	Consistent, fluent, client-centered coaching. The competencies are integrated rather than performed.	The coach notices the field but does not yet work with it. She can tell that something is happening between them. She has enough spare attention to observe herself. She largely manages her reactions by containing them, and she can bring them to supervision afterward.
MCC	Coaching that is fully partnered, spacious, and responsive to the whole person; the coach is essentially transparent to the process.	The coach works with the field in real time. Her own reactions are available to her as they occur and are used — mostly silently, occasionally spoken — in service of the client. She is not managing her responses; she is reading them.

That third row is worth dwelling on, because it explains something assessors describe and candidates find mysterious.

The most common feedback given to a strong PCC-level coach attempting MCC is some version of *the coaching is excellent but it is still the coach’s coaching*. The questions are skilled, the presence is real, the client benefits — and yet the session has a shape, and the shape belongs to the coach. Candidates hear this and reasonably ask what they are supposed to do differently.

The answer, in the terms of this book, is this. MCC-level work requires the coach to be able to notice, in the moment, that she is about to do something because *she* needs to do it — and to not do it. That capacity is Mode Four applied in real time, to oneself, without a supervisor present. It cannot be trained by practicing questions. It is trained by becoming familiar with one’s own patterns, which is what supervision is for.

THE PROGRESSION IN THREE LINES

The plainest way I can put it.

ACC: the coach is the subject of her own attention.

PCC: the client is the subject of the coach’s attention.

MCC: the *relationship* is the subject of the coach's attention, and she can use it.

One caution before we proceed. The progression above describes a typical developmental arc, not a guarantee. There are MCCs with substantial blind spots and ACCs with unusual relational sensitivity. The credential certifies demonstrated behavior in assessed sessions; it does not certify self-knowledge. Nothing in Session Eight's structural argument is suspended at any level.

A.4 Competency One — Demonstrates Ethical Practice

This competency is not marker-scored in the recording. It is assessed through overall conduct, through the Coach Knowledge Assessment, and through the requirement that the coach remain consistently in the coach role. That last phrase is where our material lives.

Remaining in the role is precisely what transference pressure erodes. Every form described in Session 6.3 is an invitation out of the coaching role and into some other one — expert, parent, rescuer, friend, therapist, judge. The client does not issue these invitations deliberately, and a coach who accepts one has not committed a dramatic ethical breach. She has drifted. Drift is the ordinary form of ethical failure in coaching, and it is almost always relationally driven.

Ethical requirement	The relational pressure that erodes it
Maintain the distinction between coaching and other professions	The client's material becomes genuinely therapeutic; the coach is cast as the one who finally understands; the relationship makes referral feel like abandonment. This is the single most common route to scope violation, and it is a transference effect.
Maintain agreed boundaries and confidentiality	Idealizing or twinship transference makes the relationship feel exceptional, and exceptional relationships generate exceptions.
Be alert to conflicts of interest	A sponsor relationship generates its own countertransference — the coach's wish to be seen as effective by the person who renews the contract.
Refer when appropriate	Rescuing countertransference and the coach's reluctance to lose a client she is invested in. The delay is rarely a knowledge failure.
Remain consistent in the role of coach	Every transference form in Session Six is a proposal for a different role.

The practical implication for candidates and for practice. If you find yourself needing to justify a boundary decision, the justification is not the interesting part. The interesting part is what in the relationship made you want to make that decision. Take that to supervision before you take the decision.

A.5 Competency Two — Embodies a Coaching Mindset

The ICF assesses elements of this competency through a specified subset of the other markers — 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.1, 6.5, 7.1, and 7.5. It is worth pausing on that list, because it is a striking one.

Look at what those eleven markers have in common. Respecting the client's own work and insight. Supporting the client's expression of feeling. Inviting response to the coach's contributions and accepting whatever comes back. Responding to the whole person. Following what the client wants. Letting the client choose what happens. Curiosity. Customization to who this client is. Exploring how the client sees themselves. Asking about the client rather than the problem. Sharing observations with no attachment.

WHY THIS COMPETENCY MATTERS MOST TO US

That is a description of a coach who has decentered herself.

A mindset that is open, curious, flexible, and client-centered is, operationally, a mindset in which the coach's own needs are not driving the conversation. And the coach's own needs entering the conversation — unrecognized — is exactly what countertransference is.

The ICF is not describing psychodynamics. But the behavioral specification of a coaching mindset and the behavioral specification of countertransference discipline turn out to be the same list.

Two elements of this competency sit outside the recorded session and deserve direct comment.

Establishing a reflective practice. This is where supervision belongs. A coach who reflects only alone is limited to what she can see about herself unaided, which — per Session Eight — excludes precisely the material that matters. Reflective practice that never includes another person is not reflective practice; it is rumination with a notebook.

Preparing for sessions. The most useful preparation for a session with a client you find difficult is not reviewing your notes. It is asking: *what happened in me last time, and what am I bringing today?* Ninety seconds. It changes the first ten minutes.

A note on the coach's own state. "Open, curious, flexible" is not a technique that can be applied on demand. It is a condition. A coach who is depleted, anxious about a credential, worried about money, or unresolved about something in her own life will find the mindset unavailable no matter how well she understands it. This is not a moral failing and it is not fixed by trying harder. It is fixed by the supporting structures of a professional life — supervision, adequate rest, a manageable caseload, and the willingness to not coach on a day when you cannot.

A.6 Competency Three — Establishes and Maintains Agreements

Four markers, all concerned with the session agreement: what the client wants, how they will know they got it, why it matters, and what they need to address to get there.

This competency is the one most often thought of as procedural, and it is the one most thoroughly penetrated by relational dynamics. The reason is simple. **The agreement is where the ownership of the session is decided**, and transference is, in essence, a proposal about who owns what.

Marker 3.1 — Identifying what the client wants from this session

Function: the coach partners with the client to establish or reconfirm the session outcome.

Transference pressure. The Evaluating Authority transference produces a client who offers the topic they believe the coach wants — the impressive topic, the topic that shows they have been working. The Idealized Sage transference produces a client who effectively asks the coach to choose the topic: *“what do you think we should look at?”* The compliant client will agree to any goal proposed and own none of them.

Countertransference failure. The coach finds the client’s stated topic uninteresting, or believes she can see the real issue, and steers. This is rarely conscious. It presents as a well-crafted question that happens to move toward the coach’s formulation. It also arises from the coach’s need to be useful: a vague goal feels professionally risky, so the coach sharpens it herself rather than tolerating the client’s ambiguity.

Recovery. Ask who the goal belongs to, and check the answer against energy rather than words. *“Is this the thing — or is this the thing you thought you should bring?”* Then wait. If the client’s energy lifts at the question, you had the wrong goal and now you have the right one.

Marker 3.2 — Defining measures of success

Function: the coach partners with the client to establish how they will know the session was successful.

Transference pressure. In a strong idealizing transference, the client’s implicit measure of success is *that the coach was impressive* or *that I felt better*. Neither will be said aloud. Both will shape what the client reports at the end, which is why sessions can be rated highly and produce nothing.

Countertransference failure. The coach who needs the session to work will accept a measure that is easy to achieve. Alternatively, the coach who is bored or subtly competitive will propose a demanding measure the client has not chosen. Watch for the coach supplying the criterion in the form of a question: *“So would you know you’d succeeded if you had a clear plan?”* That is the coach’s measure with a question mark on the end.

Recovery. Use the client’s own words for the measure. If you cannot construct the measure out of language the client has already used, you are constructing it out of your own.

Marker 3.3 — Exploring what is important or meaningful about it

Function: the coach inquires into the significance of the outcome for the client.

Transference pressure. This marker asks the client to expose value and motive, which requires safety. Where the coach has been cast as an evaluator, the client will answer at the level of the acceptable reason rather than the real one — giving the professionally respectable motive rather than the personal one. The answer will be fluent and slightly flat.

Countertransference failure. The most common miss in the whole marker set, and the cause is nearly always the same: the coach is in a hurry to get to the work. Meaning-level inquiry feels like preamble to a coach who is anxious about time or about producing value.

Recovery. Ask it, then ask it once more from a different angle. The second answer is generally the real one. If you notice yourself skipping this marker habitually, the supervision question is: *what am I afraid will happen if we slow down here?*

Marker 3.4 — Defining what the client needs to address

Function: the coach partners with the client to determine what must be worked on to reach the outcome.

Transference pressure. This is the marker at which the client most readily hands over authorship. Having named an outcome, many clients pause and look at the coach — an entirely natural transferential moment in which expertise is offered to the person in the expert's chair.

Countertransference failure. The coach takes it. This is the single largest source of MCC-level feedback about the session being “the coach's coaching.” The coach who knows what needs addressing, and is right, still fails this marker by supplying it.

Recovery. Return the question, explicitly and warmly: *“I have some thoughts, and I'd rather have yours first. What do you think needs to happen for you to get there?”* If the client genuinely cannot generate anything after real effort, Marker 7.5 permits you to offer — without attachment.

PATTERN READING

The Competency Three signature. A coach whose Competency Three markers are consistently weak is usually one of two profiles:

The rescuer — takes ownership of the goal because the client's difficulty is uncomfortable. Look for 3.1 and 3.4 missed together, with the coach talking a great deal in the first ten minutes.

The performer — needs the session to be impressive, so builds an interesting contract rather than the client's contract. Look for a sophisticated goal, weak 3.3, and a session that is more interesting than it is useful.

A.7 Competency Four — Cultivates Trust and Safety

Four markers. This competency is the field itself — it describes the conditions under which the client can bring what actually matters. It is also, structurally, the competency most vulnerable to the coach's own needs, because warmth is the easiest thing in coaching to perform.

Marker 4.1 — Acknowledging the client's talents, insights, and work

Function: the coach recognizes and respects what the client brings and does.

Transference pressure. A client in a Withholding Parent transference — one who expects not to be recognized — will deflect acknowledgment, and many coaches, reading the deflection as discomfort, stop offering it. The transference is thereby confirmed. A client in an idealizing transference may treat all insight as the coach's, which makes genuine acknowledgment of *their* work harder to locate.

Countertransference failure. Two opposite failures, and they are worth distinguishing carefully. **Under-acknowledgment** comes from competitiveness, irritation, or a coach who is uncomfortable with warmth. **Over-acknowledgment** comes from the coach's need to be liked, and it is more common and more damaging — acknowledgment that is reflexive rather than specific reads as technique, degrades trust, and is scored as such.

Recovery. Specificity is the test. "You've worked hard on this" is a phrase. "You just changed your mind in front of me, out loud, about something you've held for a long time" is an acknowledgment. If you cannot be specific, you are not acknowledging; you are reassuring — and you should ask yourself who the reassurance is for.

Marker 4.2 — Showing support, empathy, or concern

Function: the coach conveys genuine care for the client.

Transference pressure. A client who has been cast into a self-sufficient role — or who casts the coach as someone whose care must be earned — will present material in a way that makes empathy awkward to offer. Difficult things are reported briskly, with a small laugh, and moved past.

Countertransference failure. Here is the one that matters, and it is the most delicate observation in this appendix. **Empathy can be a countertransference discharge.** A coach who is uncomfortable with a client's distress may offer warmth in order to reduce the distress — and therefore her own discomfort. It looks like excellent coaching. Its function is to close the moment. Assessors describe this as empathy that arrives too quickly and moves the conversation on.

Recovery. After offering empathy, stay. Do not follow it with a question. The distinguishing feature of empathy that serves the client is that it opens space; empathy that serves the coach closes it. Silence after acknowledgment is the test, and it is also Marker 5.5.

Marker 4.3 — Supporting the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, and beliefs

Function: the coach acknowledges and makes room for what the client expresses, including beliefs and concerns the coach may not share.

Transference pressure. Where the coach is cast as an authority, the client will present perceptions tentatively and withdraw them at the first sign of disagreement. Where the coach is cast as an ally against a third party, the client will express perceptions with a confidence that invites collusion.

Countertransference failure. The coach disagrees. Not openly — the disagreement leaks. The client describes a colleague unfairly, or holds a belief the coach finds mistaken, and the coach's next question is subtly corrective. This is a very common and very consequential failure, because the client will register it and adjust what they bring for the rest of the engagement.

Recovery. Acknowledge the expression before doing anything with it, and notice the internal moment of disagreement as data rather than as a mandate. *"That's a strong reaction to him."* That is neither agreement nor correction, and it keeps the field open. Your disagreement, incidentally, is worth examining: irritation with a client's account of a third party is frequently complementary countertransference — you are feeling what others in the client's system feel.

Marker 4.4 — Inviting the client to respond to the coach's contributions, and accepting the response

Function: the coach offers, invites reaction, and takes whatever comes back without defending.

Transference pressure. A client who has cast the coach as an authority *cannot* reject a contribution, and will accept everything. This produces the most dangerous configuration in coaching: a session in which everything the coach offers appears to land, and nothing does. Marcus and Dana, in the case running through this book, is exactly this.

Countertransference failure. The coach who is attached to her contribution will hear a soft "maybe" as a yes, or will rephrase and re-offer. Watch for the same idea appearing three times in one session in three costumes. The coach does not experience this as insistence; she experiences it as making herself clear.

Recovery. Make rejection genuinely available, in words: *"That may be completely wrong — tell me if it isn't useful."* Then **accept the first no**. And keep a private count: if a client has never once declined anything you have offered across an engagement, that is not agreement, and it should go to supervision.

PATTERN READING

The Competency Four signature. Warmth without specificity is the tell. A coach whose Competency Four is technically present but scored low is almost always generating relational safety for herself rather than for the client — acknowledgment that soothes, empathy that closes, offers that must be accepted.

The supervision question is not “how do I show more empathy?” It is: “**what is uncomfortable for me in this client’s distress?**”

A.8 Competency Five — Maintains Presence

Five markers. This is the competency of this book. Presence, as the ICF describes it, is the coach being fully conscious and present with the client — and everything in the preceding eight sessions has been an argument that the chief obstacle to presence is not distraction but the coach’s own unexamined reactivity.

It is also the competency that connects directly to the *thereapist* concept developed in *Coaching Damaged Emotions*: the coach’s primary instrument is not her technique but her thereness. These five markers are what thereness looks like from the outside.

Marker 5.1 — Responding to the whole person of the client

Function: the coach works with who the client is, not only with the problem presented.

Transference pressure. Many clients present a role rather than a person — the competent executive, the struggling one, the one who has it together. The role is a transferential offering: it is the version of themselves they believe this relationship requires. A coach who works only with the presented material coaches the role for the whole engagement.

Countertransference failure. The coach who is anxious about producing value stays with the problem, because the problem is where visible progress lives. Also: a coach who finds the client’s person uncomfortable — too needy, too polished, too like herself — will unconsciously restrict herself to the content.

Recovery. Ask a who-question early and mean it. And notice which clients you never ask who-questions of. That list is a countertransference map.

Marker 5.2 — Responding to what the client wants to accomplish

Function: the coach holds the session outcome throughout, not only at the start.

Transference pressure. Agenda erosion. The client whose relational need is to be interesting, or to be liked, or to keep the coach engaged, will produce material that drifts away from the contracted outcome — not deliberately, and often compellingly.

Countertransference failure. The coach follows because the new material is more interesting. This is the “seduction by the interesting case” of Session 8.3, occurring in the

coaching room. It is also, sometimes, a mutual avoidance: both parties have moved away from something difficult and neither has noticed.

Recovery. Return to the contract out loud and let the client choose: *“We’ve moved a long way from where we started. Is this where you want to be, or shall we go back?”* Note that this simultaneously satisfies 5.2, 5.3, and 3.1. Also note that when a session drifts away from an agreed goal and neither party notices, that is worth a supervision hour — avoidance is usually shared.

Marker 5.3 — Supporting the client to choose what happens in the session

Function: the coach hands directional control to the client.

Transference pressure. The direct behavioral consequence of authority transference: the client will not choose, because choosing is the coach’s job in the relationship as they understand it. Offered a choice, they will say “whatever you think.”

Countertransference failure. The coach accepts the delegation because it is easier, faster, and gratifying. This is where the idealizing transference does its damage — not through anything dramatic, but through a coach who is enjoying being the one who knows.

Recovery. Offer real choices with real content, and tolerate the pause. If a client persistently refuses to choose, that refusal is itself the most interesting thing in the room and can be worked — at Rung Three of the ladder: *“I notice that when I offer you a choice, you hand it back to me. I’m curious about that.”* That single sentence is 5.3, 6.4, 7.1, and 7.5 simultaneously.

Marker 5.4 — Demonstrating curiosity about the client

Function: the coach shows genuine interest in learning more about who this person is.

Transference pressure. Curiosity is easily read by an anxious client as evaluation. A client who experiences the coach as an assessor will hear open questions as tests, and will produce answers rather than exploration.

Countertransference failure. Here is the important one: **curiosity dies where countertransference is unexamined.** Boredom kills it. Irritation kills it. Certainty kills it fastest of all — a coach who has formed a private formulation about a client is no longer curious, she is confirming. If you notice that you already know what this client will say, you have stopped coaching them and started coaching your model of them.

Recovery. The Uncharacteristic Test from Session One, turned on yourself: *when did I last learn something surprising about this person?* If the answer is more than three sessions ago, the field has closed. Bring it to supervision — it is not a technique problem.

Marker 5.5 — Allowing silence, pause, and reflection

Function: the coach permits space rather than filling it.

Transference pressure. Some clients experience silence as abandonment or as judgment and will fill it themselves, quickly. The coach then never gets the opportunity the marker describes — and it is worth noticing that the client filling every silence is itself a piece of relational data.

Countertransference failure. This is the purest countertransference marker in the entire set. **Nobody misses this marker because they do not know silence is valuable.** They miss it because silence is intolerable in that room, at that moment, to them. The sources vary: anxiety about value, discomfort with the client's emotion, the coach's own relationship to being unhelpful, and simple habit.

Recovery. Count. Literally count to five before speaking, for a whole session, and notice what happens in your body around three. That sensation is your countertransference, available for inspection. Most coaches who do this exercise discover something specific: a flash of the belief that they are failing.

PATTERN READING

The Competency Five signature. Presence markers fail as a cluster, not individually. A coach missing 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5 together is a coach who is doing the work rather than being with the client — usually driven by anxiety about her own adequacy, and frequently amplified by the assessment context itself.

This is why presence is the hardest competency to improve by training and the easiest to improve through supervision.

A.9 Competency Six — Listens Actively

Seven markers. Listening is where transference becomes audible — if the coach is listening for it — and it is where the coach’s own filters do their most invisible work.

A framing observation before the markers. Everything in Sessions One through Five amounts to a claim about listening: that there is a channel of information in every coaching conversation carried not by content but by the *relationship between* the speakers. Competency Six is the ICF’s specification of listening at the level of content, language, emotion, energy, and self-perception. It stops just short of the relational channel, which is where this book begins. But markers 6.3 and 6.4 come very close indeed.

Marker 6.1 — Customizing questions and observations to this client

Function: the coach’s interventions are built out of what she has learned about this specific person and situation.

Transference pressure. A client presenting a role rather than a person gives the coach limited material to customize from, and the coach ends up customizing to the role. The result sounds personalized and is not.

Countertransference failure. The coach defaults to her repertoire. Every experienced coach has a set of questions that have worked before, and under pressure — assessment pressure, difficulty, boredom, dislike — she reaches for them. The tell is that a transcript could be lifted into a different client’s session with only nouns changed.

Recovery. Use the client’s own words, images, and metaphors in your questions. This is mechanically simple and it makes the countertransferential default impossible: you cannot ask a generic question in the client’s specific language.

Marker 6.2 — Exploring the words the client uses

Function: the coach inquires into the client’s specific language.

Transference pressure. A client who feels evaluated chooses careful, professional, slightly abstract language — and abstract language is hard to explore because it has had the specificity removed. Where you hear consistently corporate vocabulary from a person who is clearly not thinking in corporate vocabulary, the field has narrowed.

Countertransference failure. The coach translates. The client says “it’s all a bit of a mess” and the coach responds about “the complexity you’re navigating.” The coach has upgraded the language, and in doing so has replaced the client’s experience with her own formulation. This is one of the most reliable indicators of a coach who is subtly performing competence.

Recovery. Repeat the exact word back and stop. “Mess.” Nothing else. Then wait.

Marker 6.3 — Exploring the client’s emotions

Function: the coach inquires into what the client is feeling.

Transference pressure. The emotion that is hardest for a client to name is generally the one directed at the coach — disappointment, gratitude that feels excessive, irritation, dependence. It is present in the room and will not be volunteered.

Countertransference failure. The most consistently under-demonstrated marker in coaching, and I do not think the reason is skill. Coaches avoid emotion because emotion is where the boundary anxiety lives. There is a widespread and mistaken belief that emotional inquiry is therapeutic territory, and it produces coaches who ask what a client *thinks* about a situation that is plainly distressing them.

Recovery. Name the boundary correctly and the anxiety dissolves. Asking what someone feels is coaching. Asking *why they have always felt that, going back to childhood* is not. The Rule of the Threshold applies exactly: use what is present, do not go and get more. Ask the simplest possible version — “*What’s the feeling?*” — and do not decorate it.

Marker 6.4 — Exploring energy shifts, nonverbal cues, and behavior

Function: the coach notices and inquires into shifts in the client’s energy, body, and manner.

This is the marker closest to the material of this book, and it deserves the longest treatment.

An energy shift is very often a transference event. The client’s tone changes when a particular colleague is mentioned. The pace accelerates when they approach something. They laugh where laughter does not fit. They become formal at the exact moment the material becomes personal. They apologize for taking your time.

Each of those is the marker’s object *and* a piece of relational data. And critically — **the marker is satisfied by describing and inquiring, not by interpreting.** The ICF asks the coach to notice and explore. It does not ask her to explain. Which means Competency Six explicitly authorizes Rung Three of the ladder from Session Six and explicitly stops short of Rung Five.

THE LADDER AND THE MARKERS

The alignment is exact, and it is worth stating plainly.

Rung One — Notice and hold. *Internal; no marker.*

Rung Two — Adjust your own behavior. *Supports 5.1, 5.2, 5.4.*

Rung Three — Name what is present in the room. **Markers 6.4 and 7.5.**

Rung Four — Connect to the wider system. **Markers 7.2, 7.3.**

Rung Five — Interpret origin. *Outside the marker set. Outside coaching.*

The professional standard and the boundary this book has argued for are the same boundary. That is not a coincidence — it is what a well-built competency model looks like.

Transference pressure. Naming an energy shift is an intimate act and the client may deflect it, particularly a client for whom being observed is unsafe. Deflection is not refusal; offer it once more, later, more lightly.

Countertransference failure. Two. First, the coach does not notice — because she is monitoring her own performance, which consumes exactly the attention this marker requires. Second, she notices and says nothing, because naming it feels intrusive. That second one is worth examining: intrusiveness anxiety in a coach is very often about the coach's own discomfort with being seen, projected.

Recovery. Describe, do not interpret. *"Something changed just then — your voice dropped."* Then stop. The gap between the description and the client's response is where the work is.

Marker 6.5 — Exploring how the client perceives themselves or their world

Function: the coach inquires into the client's self-concept and worldview.

Transference pressure. Self-perception is exactly the domain transference distorts — the client's account of themselves is partly constructed for the listener. A client in an authority transference gives you a slightly diminished self-portrait; a client wanting to be admired gives you an inflated one.

Countertransference failure. The coach has already formed a view of who the client is and inquires in a way that seeks confirmation. Note that this is the coach's *complementary* identification doing the work: having taken up a position in the client's system, she now sees the client as that position sees them.

Recovery. Ask for the self-description in the client's own terms before offering any reflection, and be alert to the version that seems constructed for you. When a self-description is startlingly harsh or startlingly generous, ask who else would say that.

Marker 6.6 — Allowing the client to complete without interrupting

Function: the coach does not interrupt unless there is a stated coaching purpose.

Countertransference failure. Interruption is almost never a listening failure. It is an anxiety discharge. The coach interrupts because she has thought of something good and fears losing it, or because the client's pace is uncomfortable, or because she needs to demonstrate she is following. Track *when* you interrupt across a few recordings; the timing is more informative than the frequency. Most coaches find they interrupt at a consistent emotional temperature.

Recovery. Let the thought go. If it matters, it will come back — and if it does not come back it was yours, not the client's.

Marker 6.7 — Reflecting or summarizing succinctly

Function: the coach concisely reflects back to support the client's clarity.

Countertransference failure. The word doing the work in this marker is *succinctly*. Long summaries are a coach-serving behavior: they demonstrate attention, buy thinking time, and reassure the coach that she has understood. They also take the material away from the client and hand it back in the coach's shape. A summary longer than three sentences is usually about the coach.

Recovery. Summarize in the client's words, in under fifteen seconds, and end with a check rather than a full stop.

A.10 Competency Seven — Evokes Awareness

Eight markers. This is the competency where the coach's own material most easily enters the work disguised as insight, and it contains the single most relationally sophisticated marker in the set, 7.5.

Marker 7.1 — Asking about the client's thinking, feeling, values, needs, beliefs, behavior

Function: the coach's questions are directed at the client rather than at the situation.

Transference pressure. A client using the coaching to avoid themselves — and many do — will keep returning to the situation, the other people, the constraints. This is not evasiveness; it is often the client's established way of managing a relationship with someone who might see them.

Countertransference failure. The coach colludes with the situational focus because it is more comfortable for her too. Problem-solving is safe territory for both parties. Where a whole session stays at the level of the situation, it is usually a joint achievement.

Recovery. Turn one question per section back to the person. "*And what does that do to you?*"

Markers 7.2 and 7.3 — Exploring beyond current thinking about self and situation

Function: the coach's questions open new or expanded ways of thinking about who the client is (7.2) and about their situation (7.3).

Transference pressure. New thinking about the self requires the client to be, briefly, unformed in front of the coach. That requires safety. Under an evaluating transference the client will not do it, and will instead produce a new-sounding thought that is a variation on an old one — fluent, plausible, unaccompanied by any change in energy.

Countertransference failure. The coach needs an insight to occur. The whole professional identity of coaching is bound up with the moment of new awareness, and a coach who has not produced one by minute forty will begin to push. Pushed insight is recognizable in transcripts: the client produces a realization in the coach's vocabulary rather than their own.

Recovery. Give up on the insight. This sounds facetious and it is the most practical advice in this appendix. A coach who does not require an insight asks better questions, tolerates longer silence, and gets more insights. Note also the connection to *Resistance*: an insight that cannot be reached under good conditions is usually being held in place by a competing commitment, and no question will dislodge it. The thing to explore is the holding, not the gap.

Marker 7.4 — Exploring beyond current thinking toward the desired outcome

Function: the coach's questions move the exploration toward what the client wants to achieve.

Transference pressure. Where the coach has been cast as the one with answers, the client will look for direction at exactly this point, and the invitation will be strong because the session is maturing and something is expected.

Countertransference failure. The coach's solution appears here, in interrogative form. Every coach knows a leading question when she reads one in someone else's transcript and almost none catch it live. The diagnostic: were you attached to the answer? If a client's "no" to your question would have disappointed you, it was not a question.

Recovery. Before asking, run a one-second internal check: *do I have a preferred answer to this?* If yes, either drop it or convert it into an explicit offer under 7.5, where it belongs and where it is scoreable.

Marker 7.5 — Sharing observations, intuitions, and feelings with no attachment

Function: the coach may offer her own observations, intuitions, comments, thoughts, or feelings — without attachment — and invites the client to explore them.

This marker is the professional authorization for everything in Session Six. It should be read carefully by every coach who has ever wondered whether it is permissible to say what she is noticing.

MARKER 7.5 AND THIS BOOK

Read the marker's scope. It permits the coach to share *intuitions* and *feelings*. Not just observations of the client — the coach's own internal responses.

That is countertransference disclosure, named as a competency and expected at PCC level.

The three constraints are the whole discipline: it must be **shared** (not asserted), with **no attachment** (the client may reject it), and as an **invitation to explore** (it opens rather than concludes).

Rung Three of the ladder, in ICF language.

Transference pressure. The idealizing client accepts everything offered under 7.5, which technically satisfies the marker and defeats its purpose. The marker requires no attachment on the coach's side; it cannot manufacture freedom on the client's. Where a client accepts every offer, the coach should say so — which is itself a 7.5 offer, at one level up.

Countertransference failure. Attachment, and it is subtle. The coach offers, the client demurs, and the coach explains what she meant. That explanation is the attachment. Also: offering for the coach's relief — disclosing an internal state to discharge it — which is a red line from Session 6.5 and not what this marker authorizes.

Recovery. Four elements. Own it (“what I notice in me...”). Mark the uncertainty (“this may be mine...”). Keep it short. Hand it over and let it go (“what, if anything, does that land on?”). If the client says nothing lands, say “fair enough” and move on — that is the marker being demonstrated, not missed.

Marker 7.6 — Clear, direct, open questions, one at a time, at a reflective pace

Function: question construction and pacing.

Countertransference failure. Stacked questions are anxiety made audible. A coach who asks three questions in one breath is not confident in the first. Long preambles before a question serve the same function — they cushion the coach against the question failing. Under assessment conditions this deteriorates markedly, which is itself worth noting: the assessment is a relationship, and the candidate has a transference to it.

Recovery. One question. Full stop. Wait. If you find you cannot leave a question unadorned, the discomfort you feel in the silence after it is the thing to examine.

Marker 7.7 — Language that is generally clear and concise

Function: the coach's own language is economical and comprehensible.

Countertransference failure. Complexity is a defense. Coaches become abstract at exactly the points where the material is emotionally live — you can locate the difficult moment in a transcript by finding where the coach's sentences get longer. Model-language and technical vocabulary do the same work: they put a layer between the coach and the room.

Recovery. Mark the three longest coach turns in your next transcript and ask what was happening just before each one.

Marker 7.8 — Allowing the client to do most of the talking

Function: the balance of airtime favors the client substantially.

Countertransference failure. The purest and most measurable countertransference indicator available to a coach. Airtime is not a listening skill; it is a proxy for whose needs are being met. And unlike almost everything else in this book, **it can be counted.**

Recovery. Time yourself across five recorded sessions and chart it by client. The variance between clients is the finding — the clients with whom you talk most are the clients doing something to you. That list, produced honestly, is a better countertransference inventory than anything in Appendix B.

A.11 Competency Eight — Facilitates Client Growth

Nine markers, covering the movement from awareness to learning to action, and the completion of the session. Two relational dynamics dominate the whole competency and are worth stating before the markers.

First: this is where dependency is either created or prevented. Every marker in Competency Eight hands authorship to the client — the client states the learning, designs the action, chooses the accountability, decides how to close. A coach who supplies any of those is building a relationship in which the client requires her. That is not a scoring problem. It is a professional-harm problem.

Second: this is where the coach's need for the session to have worked comes due. Everything unresolved in the coach about her own value arrives in the last fifteen minutes.

Marker 8.1 — Exploring progress toward what the client wanted

Transference pressure. A client who wants to please will report progress that has not occurred. This is extremely common and rarely deliberate — in the moment, they believe it.

Countertransference failure. The coach accepts the report because she wants it too. Neither party is lying; both are motivated.

Recovery. Ask for evidence in behavioral terms. “*What’s different now from when we started?*” And be willing to hear “not much.” A coach who can receive “this didn’t help” without visible cost is doing something more valuable than any insight she could have produced.

Markers 8.2 and 8.3 — Inviting the client’s learning about self and situation

Transference pressure. Under an idealizing transference the client’s stated learning is frequently *about the coach* — how helpful this was, how good the questions were. Warmly meant, and it is the transference speaking.

Countertransference failure. The coach supplies the learning. Almost always kindly, almost always accurately, and it converts the client’s insight into the coach’s gift. Watch particularly for the summarized learning: “So what I’m hearing is that you’ve realized...” That sentence fails 8.2 while sounding like excellent practice.

Recovery. Ask, then be silent for as long as it takes. If the client says “I don’t know,” wait longer. This is where Marker 5.5 does its most valuable work in the whole session.

Markers 8.4, 8.5, 8.6 — Use of learning, post-session design, moving forward

Transference pressure. The client may design action to demonstrate commitment to the coach rather than to serve their own goal. The tell is action that is disproportionate — five commitments where one would do. Over-commitment is a relational signal, not enthusiasm, and it usually produces a next session that opens with an apology.

Countertransference failure. The coach’s rescuing pattern arrives here in full. She helps design the action, anticipates barriers, offers resources. Every one of those is a partnering marker converted into a solo performance. Also: the coach who under-commits the client because she does not want them to fail is managing her own investment.

Recovery. Ask what will get in the way, and take the answer seriously rather than solving it. If the client commits to more than seems plausible, say so: *“That’s a lot for two weeks. What would be enough?”*

Marker 8.7 — Designing accountability

Transference pressure. The client wants to be accountable *to the coach*, and will propose it directly. This feels like commitment and it is dependency being contracted.

Countertransference failure. The coach accepts, because being the person someone is accountable to is gratifying and because it guarantees engagement. This is the point in the marker set where the coach’s commercial interest and the client’s development are in the most direct tension, and it deserves to be named as such.

Recovery. Redirect the accountability into the client’s own system — a colleague, a calendar, a manager, a stated standard. If accountability to the coach is genuinely the client’s choice, make its temporary nature explicit.

Marker 8.8 — Celebrating progress and learning

Countertransference failure. Two, symmetrical. The coach who needs to be liked celebrates everything, and the celebration becomes noise. The coach who is competitive or withholding celebrates nothing, and the client’s work goes unrecognized for an entire engagement. Both are relational, neither is technical.

Recovery. Specificity, again. Name the actual thing.

Marker 8.9 — Partnering on how to complete the session

Transference pressure. Endings activate more than anything else in coaching — separation, sufficiency, whether this was enough. Clients frequently produce significant material in the last three minutes. That is not bad timing; it is a relationship to endings, and it is worth naming across sessions rather than chasing in the moment.

Countertransference failure. The coach ends on her own terms because time is short and she is anxious. Or she extends, repeatedly, because ending feels like a small abandonment — and a coach who habitually runs over is telling you something about herself, not about her clients' needs.

Recovery. Hand the ending over with time to spare: *“We’ve got five minutes. How do you want to use them?”*

A.12 What the Assessor Actually Hears

A short section for candidates and mentor coaches, and a caution about how it should be used.

An assessor cannot hear transference. She cannot hear countertransference. She has no access to the coach's internal state and does not attempt to infer it. What she hears is behavior, and the marker set is her instrument.

But relational dynamics are not silent. They produce characteristic behavioral signatures, and those signatures are what get scored. This is the bridge between the two halves of this book and the practical reason the appendix exists.

What is happening relationally	What the assessor hears	Markers affected
The coach has been cast as expert and accepted	The coach directs; the client defers; the session has the coach's shape	3.4, 5.3, 7.4, 8.2
The coach is rescuing	Coach airtime is high; solutions appear; the client is protected from difficulty	7.8, 8.5, 8.6, 5.5
The coach is anxious about value	No silence; stacked questions; long summaries; a hurried contract	5.5, 6.7, 7.6, 3.3
The coach is bored or disengaged	Generic questions; no customization; no curiosity; flat pace	5.4, 6.1, 6.4
The coach is attached to a formulation	Leading questions; the same idea re-offered; the client's "no" not accepted	4.4, 7.4, 7.5
The coach is avoiding the emotional register	Emotion in the client's voice goes unremarked; the session stays on the situation	6.3, 6.4, 7.1
A collusive twinship has formed	Warm, agreeable, low-challenge session; nothing is examined	4.4, 7.2, 7.3
The client is complying, not engaging	Everything the coach offers is accepted; no client resistance anywhere	4.4, 8.1

HOW NOT TO USE THE TABLE ABOVE

The caution, and it matters. Do not use this table to diagnose candidates. An assessor scores behavior, and a mentor coach should too.

The table's legitimate use is the reverse direction: when a candidate has a *stable, repeated* pattern across several recordings and ordinary skill feedback has not shifted it, this table suggests where to look. It is a hypothesis generator for supervision, not an interpretation to be delivered.

And it must be offered to the coach as a question, never as a finding. The rules of Session Five apply here without modification.

A.13 The Marker Distortion Index

The whole appendix, compressed. For each marker: the relational dynamic most likely to cause it to fail, and the working question. Use the final column as a personal audit — mark the six you are least reliable on.

Marker	Most common relational cause of failure	Working question
3.1	Coach steers toward her own formulation	Whose goal is this?
3.2	Coach supplies the measure	Is this in the client's words?
3.3	Coach is hurrying to the work	What am I afraid of if we slow down?
3.4	Coach accepts the client's handover of authorship	Did I just take something I was offered?
4.1	Reflexive praise, or withheld recognition	Can I be specific?
4.2	Empathy used to close discomfort — the coach's	Did that open space or shut it?
4.3	Coach's disagreement leaking into her questions	Am I correcting?
4.4	Coach attached; client too compliant to refuse	When did this client last say no to me?
5.1	Coach stays with the problem where progress is visible	When did I last ask who?
5.2	Both parties drift toward more interesting material	Are we still where we agreed?
5.3	Coach accepts directional control	Am I choosing what she should choose?
5.4	Coach already knows what this client will say	When did I last learn something surprising?
5.5	Silence is intolerable to the coach	What happens in me at three seconds?
6.1	Coach defaults to her repertoire under pressure	Could this question go to anyone?
6.2	Coach upgrades the client's language	Did I translate?
6.3	Boundary anxiety about emotion	Am I asking what she thinks about something she feels?

Marker	Most common relational cause of failure	Working question
6.4	Coach monitoring herself; or fears intruding	What changed, and did I say so?
6.5	Coach confirming an existing formulation	Am I curious or collecting evidence?
6.6	Interruption as anxiety discharge	When do I interrupt?
6.7	Long summary reassures the coach	Under fifteen seconds?
7.1	Joint retreat into the situation	Have I turned one question back to her?
7.2	Coach needs an insight to occur	Am I pushing?
7.3	As 7.2, applied to the situation	Whose new thought is this?
7.4	Coach's solution in question form	Would a no have disappointed me?
7.5	Attachment; or disclosure for the coach's relief	Who is this offer for?
7.6	Stacked questions; cushioning preamble	Can I stop after one?
7.7	Abstraction as defense at the live moment	Why did that sentence get long?
7.8	Coach's needs occupying the room	What percentage — and with which clients?
8.1	Both want progress to have occurred	What is the evidence?
8.2	Coach supplies the learning about the who	Did I say "what I'm hearing is..."?
8.3	As 8.2, applied to the what	Whose words was that in?
8.4	Coach designs the application	Did she generate this?
8.5	Rescuing at the design stage	Am I doing the thinking?
8.6	Coach anticipates the barriers herself	Did I ask, or did I tell?
8.7	Accountability contracted to the coach	Have I made myself necessary?
8.8	Indiscriminate praise, or none at all	Did I name the actual thing?
8.9	Coach ends on her own terms, or cannot end	Do I habitually run over?

A.14 Integration with the PCC Marker Flight Plan Model

For readers working with my *PCC Marker Flight Plan Model* materials, the connection is direct and I want to make it explicit.

The Flight Plan Model treats the markers not as a checklist but as a route: the coach files a plan, flies the session, and reviews the track afterward against what actually happened. The premise is that competence at PCC level is not the ability to produce marker behaviors on demand but the ability to *navigate* — to know where you are, notice deviation, and correct.

This appendix supplies the missing instrument. In flight terms, the markers tell you your position. **They do not tell you what is moving the aircraft.** Wind is invisible, continuous, and the sole reason that heading and track diverge. Relational dynamics are the wind.

FLIGHT PLAN EXTENSION

Three additions to the Flight Plan review, and they take four minutes.

- 1. Drift analysis.** Where the flown track diverged from the plan, do not ask only “which marker did I miss?” Ask “what was moving me?” Use the working-question column of A.13.
- 2. The wind log.** Across ten sessions, record the drift direction each time. Coaches drift consistently. Your prevailing wind — toward rescue, toward expertise, toward pace, toward comfort — is your countertransference signature, and once you know it you can correct for it before takeoff.
- 3. Per-client variance.** Chart your marker reliability by client rather than in aggregate. Aggregate scores conceal exactly the information you need. **The client with whom your markers deteriorate is your supervision agenda.**

One further note for mentor coaches using the model. The Flight Plan review is not supervision and should not become it. When the wind log reveals a stable pattern, that is the point of referral into supervision — not the point at which the mentor coach begins exploring the mentee’s inner life. The distinction protects both parties and it is the same boundary described in Session 7.4: **a relationship that assesses cannot do full Mode Four work.**

A.15 Exercises for This Appendix

Exercise A.1 — The Marker Signature

Duration: 90 minutes. Materials: three recent recordings or mentor-coach reports.

- 143.** List every marker noted as missed or weak across all three sessions.
- 144.** Keep only those appearing in two or more. These are your signature; single instances are noise.
- 145.** Look each one up in the index at A.13 and write down the relational cause given.
- 146.** Read your list of causes as a single paragraph about yourself. Do not soften it.
- 147.** Take that paragraph to supervision. Not to mentor coaching — to supervision.

Most coaches find that three or four apparently unrelated marker weaknesses collapse into one relational pattern. That collapse is the point of the exercise.

Exercise A.2 — The Airtime Audit

Duration: five sessions plus 30 minutes.

Record five sessions with five different clients. Measure coach airtime as a percentage of each. Chart them.

Then answer: which client produces your highest figure, and what is it about that person? The variance is the finding, and it is the most objective countertransference measurement available to a working coach.

Exercise A.3 — The Refusal Count

Duration: one full client engagement.

For each client, count how many times they decline, disagree with, or simply do not take up something you offer.

Any client whose count is zero across an engagement is not agreeing with you — they are in a transference that makes disagreement unavailable, and it is your job to notice, not theirs. Bring it to supervision, then consider naming it under Marker 7.5.

Exercise A.4 — The Level Question

Duration: 45 minutes, written.

Using the progression table at A.3, write honestly about where you actually operate — not what you are credentialed at. Then answer:

- With which clients do I drop a level? What do they have in common?
- What would I have to be able to tolerate in myself to work consistently at the next level?
- Who currently helps me with that, and how often?

Exercise A.5 — The Mentor's Reframe (for mentor coaches)

Duration: one mentoring session.

Take a marker your mentee has missed three times. Instead of teaching it again, ask three questions: *What is happening for you at that moment in the session? What would you have to do differently? What makes that hard?*

Then stop. Do not interpret, do not explore origin, and refer onward if the answer opens something that belongs in supervision. This exercise is as much a boundary drill for you as a development tool for them.

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APPENDIX B

The Working Set

Every inventory and exercise, collected for reproduction and repeated use.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Permission to reproduce. The inventories and exercises in this appendix may be reproduced by the purchaser of this book for use in their own practice, in their own supervision, and with their own supervisees and training groups, provided the source is acknowledged. They may not be reproduced for sale or incorporated into commercial training materials without written permission.

What these instruments are. Structured mirrors. None is a psychometric instrument. None has been validated. None produces a score that means anything outside the conversation it starts. Their entire value lies in what you notice while completing them and in what you do with a colleague afterward.

How to use the scale. Where a 1–5 rating is called for: 1 = rarely or not at all true of me; 3 = sometimes, inconsistently; 5 = consistently and reliably true of me. Resist the middle. If everything is a 3, you have not answered.

B.1 A Twelve-Month Program

The material in this book is too much to work in one pass. What follows is a sequence that has worked for supervision groups I have run, and it assumes roughly two hours a month plus ordinary practice.

Months	Focus	Instruments	What you should have by the end
1–2	Establishing baseline	Inventory 1; Exercises 1.1, 1.2	A working knowledge of your own normal, so that departures from it become visible.
3–4	Your own material	Inventory 3; Exercises 3.2, 3.3	A short list of the themes that reliably catch you, in your own words.
5–6	Reading your reactions	Inventory 4; Exercises 4.1, 4.2	The ability to sort a reaction into concordant, complementary, or your own.
7–8	The coaching boundary	Inventory 6; Exercises 6.1, 6.2, 6.4	Drafted Rung Three language you would actually say, and a referral you can make cleanly.
9–10	Supervision use	Inventory 5 or 7; Exercises 5.1, 7.3	A supervision contract that includes Mode Four explicitly.
11–12	Consolidation	Exercises A.1, A.2, A.3; repeat Inventory 1	A marker signature, an airtime chart, and a comparison against month one.

Supervisors should add Inventory 8 and Exercises 8.1 and 8.3 at months five and nine respectively, and should not defer Exercise 8.4 past month six.

The most important instruction in this appendix: repeat Inventory 1 at month twelve without looking at your first set of answers, then compare. The movement is the finding. Coaches who do this typically discover that two or three items have shifted substantially and the rest have not moved at all — which tells you both what the year did and what it did not touch.

B.2 Inventory 1 — Relational Baseline

From Session One. Rate 1–5. Complete before working with the rest of the book, and again twelve months later.

#	Statement	Rating
1	I notice my emotional state changing during a coaching session.	
2	I can describe how I typically feel with most of my clients.	
3	I notice bodily sensations while coaching — tension, fatigue, restlessness.	
4	I can tell the difference between tiredness that is mine and tiredness that arrives in a particular session.	
5	I have clients with whom I consistently feel more competent than usual.	
6	I have clients with whom I consistently feel less competent than usual.	
7	I notice when I want a particular client to like me.	
8	I notice when I am bored, and I do not immediately act on it.	
9	I notice irritation with a client before it affects my questions.	
10	I can identify which clients I look forward to and which I do not.	
11	I have a sense of how I come across in a first session.	
12	I notice when I am working harder than the client.	
13	I know what my own difficult material is — the themes that catch me.	
14	I have somewhere to take my reactions other than my own head.	
15	I could describe my characteristic style of getting things wrong.	

Reading it. Items 1–4 measure access to your own experience; 5–12 measure differentiation between clients; 13–15 measure the structures around your practice. A low score in the third group makes the first two unreliable, because self-observation without a witness converges on what you already believe.

B.3 Inventory 2 — Freudian Legacy Audit

From Session Two. Mark each Agree / Disagree / Unsure, then write where you learned it.

#	Statement	A/D/U	Where I learned this
1	A coach should keep her own reactions out of the session.		
2	Strong positive feeling from a client is a sign the coaching is going well.		
3	What a client cannot articulate, they will act out.		
4	Neutrality is achievable if the coach is disciplined enough.		
5	A coach's emotional response to a client is a problem to be managed.		
6	Understanding why a client responds to me this way is part of coaching.		
7	A coach who is affected by a client has lost objectivity.		
8	Clients repeat old relational patterns with new people, including coaches.		
9	Disclosing my own reaction to a client is unprofessional.		
10	Experienced coaches no longer need their reactions examined by others.		

Reading it. Items 1, 4, 5, 7, and 9 are the surgeon inheritance; items 2, 3, 6, 8 are the telephone-receiver inheritance. Item 10 is the one that matters most, and the correct answer is disagree. The fourth column is the real exercise — most coaches find their positions were absorbed rather than chosen.

B.4 Inventory 3 — Complex and Projection Screening

From Session Three. For each domain, rate the intensity of your reaction 1–5, then name the type of client who triggers it.

Domain	Intensity 1–5	The client who triggers it
Being seen as incompetent		
Being dismissed or not taken seriously		
Being needed		

Domain	Intensity 1–5	The client who triggers it
Being excluded		
Authority — being under it		
Authority — exercising it		
Conflict and open disagreement		
Displays of distress		
Displays of anger		
Success and visible achievement in others		
Dependency in others		
Being liked, or not		

Reading it. Anything rated 4 or 5 is a live complex, in Jung’s sense: an area with its own energy that will organize your perception before you have decided anything. The third column is the more useful one. Where the same client type appears against three or more domains, you have located a pattern rather than a preference.

B.5 Inventory 4 — Countertransference Type Screen

From Session Four. Complete about a single specific client, in one sitting, immediately after a session.

- 148.** What am I feeling right now, in one or two plain words?
- 149.** Where is it in my body?
- 150.** Is this feeling characteristic of me generally?
- 151.** Is it characteristic of me with this client?
- 152.** Did it start before the session, or during it?
- 153.** If during — at what moment?
- 154.** Do I feel *as the client feels*? (concordant)
- 155.** Do I feel *as someone in the client’s life feels toward them*? (complementary)
- 156.** What role am I being invited into?
- 157.** Have I already accepted it?
- 158.** What am I being pulled to do?
- 159.** What would happen if I did not do it?
- 160.** Does this connect to anything on my own list from Inventory 3?

161. What is my best current hypothesis, in one sentence?

162. What would disconfirm it?

Reading it. Item 15 is the discipline of the whole book in a single question. A hypothesis that nothing could disconfirm is a belief. Items 7 and 8 are Racker: concordant tells you the client's inner experience; complementary tells you their impact on others.

B.6 Inventory 5 — Parallel Process Screening

From Session Five. Complete during or immediately after a supervision session. Yes / No.

#	Question	Y/N
1	Is the atmosphere in this supervision uncharacteristic?	
2	Am I behaving differently than I usually do here?	
3	Is the supervisee behaving differently than usual?	
4	Does the structure of this conversation echo the structure of the case?	
5	Is there a stuckness here that matches the stuckness described?	
6	Am I feeling something the supervisee described feeling?	
7	Am I feeling something the client is said to feel?	
8	Am I behaving as the client is said to behave?	
9	Is the supervisee behaving as the client is said to behave?	
10	Is there an unusual difficulty with time, boundaries, or arrangements?	
11	Has something been forgotten, mislaid, or missed?	
12	Have I excluded my own state today as an explanation?	
13	Have I excluded the ordinary dynamics of this supervisory relationship?	
14	Is there a second, independent instance — not just one?	
15	Could I state a plausible mechanism for how this transferred?	
16	Would naming this serve the supervisee, or relieve me?	

Decision rule. Items 12, 13, and 14 must all be satisfied before naming anything. Item 16 is the final gate, and it is the one people skip.

B.7 Inventory 6 — Coaching Boundary Audit

From Session Six. Mark Never / Rarely / Sometimes / Often.

#	In my coaching, I...	N/R/S/O
1	ask about a client's childhood or family of origin.	
2	use clinical language with clients.	
3	form private explanations of a client's psychology that I never test.	
4	notice a client is in distress and stay with the topic anyway.	
5	work with material I suspect is trauma-related.	
6	name what I notice happening between us, in the present tense.	
7	disclose my own reaction in order to feel better.	
8	find myself the person a client relies on most.	
9	extend sessions or engagements beyond what was agreed.	
10	delay a referral I know is needed.	
11	contract in a way that makes naming the relationship permissible.	
12	take my reactions to a supervisor rather than resolving them alone.	

Reading it. Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10 should be *Never* or *Rarely*; anything higher is a red line from Session 6.5 being crossed. Items 6, 11, and 12 should be *Often*; anything lower means you have foreclosed the legitimate use of this material. Items 4, 8, and 9 are the drift indicators — they rise slowly and are the earliest warning of scope erosion.

B.8 Inventory 7 — Mode Four Readiness

From Session Seven. Part A for coaches, Part B for supervisors. Rate 1–5.

Part A — As a supervisee

#	Statement	Rating
1	I bring my own reactions to supervision, not only the client's material.	
2	I have described feeling incompetent to my supervisor.	
3	I have described disliking a client.	
4	I have described being attracted to, or unusually drawn to, a client.	
5	I have described being bored.	
6	I bring sessions that went badly, not only ones that puzzle me.	
7	I can be asked what I felt without deflecting to what I did.	

#	Statement	Rating
8	My supervision contract explicitly includes my own reactions.	
9	I do not perform competence in supervision.	
10	There is nothing I am currently withholding from my supervisor.	

Part B — As a supervisor

#	Statement	Rating
1	I contract for Mode Four work explicitly at the outset.	
2	I normalize before I inquire.	
3	I can receive a supervisee's difficult disclosure without visible reaction.	
4	I do not rush from a disclosure to its meaning.	
5	I always return the work to the client before the session ends.	
6	I know which of my supervisees never bring their own reactions.	
7	I can tell the difference between Mode Four and therapy in my own practice.	
8	I do not assess and supervise the same person on the same material.	
9	I have more than three ways to ask about a coach's internal experience.	
10	I would notice if a supervisee were performing openness.	

Reading it. In Part A, item 10 is the summary item; a high score on 1–9 with a low score on 10 is the most honest possible result and the most useful thing to bring to your next session. In Part B, item 8 is a structural condition rather than a skill — if you cannot satisfy it, the rest of Part B is constrained no matter how skilled you are.

B.9 Inventory 8 — The Supervisor's Mode Six Audit

From Session Eight. Reproduced there in full at 8.11. Rate 1–5; complete annually.

Note again the two readings that matter. **Items 11 and 12 form a pair** — an invitation to challenge that has produced no challenge was not believed. **Item 15 inverts** — confidence that you would notice your own grandiosity is the symptom.

B.10 Exercise Index

All thirty-eight exercises, by purpose rather than by session. Full instructions appear at the location given.

Purpose	Exercises	Location
Establishing what your normal is	Doorway Log (1.1); Uncharacteristic Audit (1.2); Reluctance Question (1.3)	Session One
Examining inherited assumptions	Breuer Inventory (2.1); Positive Transference Search (2.2); Dora Test (2.3)	Session Two
Working with your own material	Constellation Log (3.1); Shadow Inventory Through Irritation (3.2); Projection Return (3.3); Nigredo Review (3.4)	Session Three
Sorting and classifying reactions	Role Audit (4.1); Concordant or Complementary (4.2); Body Channel (4.3); The Bion Session (4.4)	Session Four
Detecting parallel process	Structural Echo Audit (5.1); Blind Presentation (5.2); Direction Test (5.3); The Sculpt (5.4, group)	Session Five
Boundary and intervention discipline	Casting Audit (6.1); Drafting Rung Three (6.2); Exceptions Log (6.3); Referral Rehearsal (6.4); Competing Commitment of the Coach (6.5)	Session Six
Supervision practice — Mode Four	Mode Audit (7.1); Twelve Techniques Rehearsal (7.2); Unasked Question Inventory (7.3); Receiving Without Flinching (7.4)	Session Seven
Supervision practice — Mode Six	The Withheld Log (8.1); Source Check Drill (8.2); Shadow Interview (8.3); Soliciting the Challenge (8.4)	Session Eight
Credentialing and marker work	Marker Signature (A.1); Airtime Audit (A.2); Refusal Count (A.3); Level Question (A.4); Mentor's Reframe (A.5)	Appendix A

B.11 The Five That Matter Most

If you do nothing else in this book, do these. They are chosen because each produces observable data rather than self-report, and because between them they cover the whole argument.

163. The Uncharacteristic Audit (1.2). Because you cannot detect a departure from your baseline until you know your baseline. Everything else depends on this one.

164. The Role Audit (4.1). Because Sandler's question — *what role am I being invited into, and have I already accepted it?* — is the most productive single question in the whole field.

165. Drafting Rung Three (6.2). Because knowing you may name what is happening between you is useless until you have words you would actually say out loud.

166. The Withheld Log (8.1), or its coaching equivalent. Because the pattern of what you consistently do not say is the most precise map of your avoidances available to you.

167. The Airtime Audit (A.2). Because it is the only measurement in this book that is genuinely objective, and because the variance between clients cannot be argued with.

APPENDIX B CLOSE

A final word about all of it. Not one of these instruments produces knowledge. They produce *questions with better aim*.

The knowledge, insofar as it is available at all, comes from the conversation you have with another person after you complete them — which is the argument the whole book has been making, and the reason none of this can be done alone.

APPENDIX C

Glossary and Master Bibliography

The vocabulary, defined plainly — and the whole library in one place.

ABOUT THIS GLOSSARY

This glossary is written for readers meeting the vocabulary for the first time. Definitions are deliberately plain and deliberately shorter than a specialist would want. Where a term is contested — and several are — the entry says so rather than pretending to a consensus that does not exist.

Terms are given in the sense used in this book. Several have narrower or different meanings within psychoanalytic literature, and readers moving on to primary sources should expect that.

C.1 Glossary

Analytical psychology — Jung's system, distinguished from Freud's psychoanalysis. Emphasizes the purposive rather than merely causal function of unconscious material, the collective as well as personal unconscious, and individuation as the central developmental task. Session Three.

Archetype — In Jung, an inherited *predisposition* to form certain kinds of image and pattern — not an inherited image. Mother, father, healer, hero, shadow. The predisposition is universal; the content is personal and cultural.

Boundary (scope of practice) — The professional line between coaching and psychotherapy. In this book, operationalized as the Rule of the Threshold.

Clinical rhombus — Ekstein and Wallerstein's four-cornered model — patient, therapist, supervisor, and administration — in which dynamics circulate around all four points rather than only between two. Session Five.

Collective unconscious — Jung's proposal of a layer of the psyche common to human beings, containing archetypal predispositions rather than personal memories. The most contested element of his system; nothing practical in this book depends on accepting it.

Competing commitment — A hidden commitment that actively protects the very behavior a person wants to change, making the change feel dangerous rather than merely difficult. Developed at length in *Resistance: The Gateway to Insight*; integrated at §6.8.

Complementary identification — Racker's term for the coach or therapist unconsciously identifying with someone *in the client's life* — feeling toward the client what others feel toward them. Tells you the client's impact. Session Four.

Complex — In Jung, an emotionally charged cluster of associations that operates with relative autonomy, organizes perception, and behaves as though it had a will of its own. Everyone has them; having them is not pathology.

Concordant identification — Racker's term for identifying with the client's own position — feeling what the client feels. Tells you the client's inner experience. Session Four.

Container / contained — Bion's model in which one person receives another's unbearable emotional material, holds it, makes it tolerable, and returns it in usable form. The core function of both good coaching and good supervision.

Countertransference — The totality of the practitioner's emotional responses to the client, understood as potential data rather than as contamination. Originally (Freud) the practitioner's own neurotic interference; redefined by Heimann in 1950 as an instrument of perception. **Both meanings remain in circulation and confusing them causes most of the trouble in this field.**

Enactment — A moment in which practitioner and client unconsciously act out a dynamic together, rather than one party doing something to the other. The relational school's central concept. Session Four.

Individuation — Jung's term for the lifelong process of becoming the person one specifically is — integrating unconscious material, withdrawing projections, and moving from persona-identification toward the Self. Not self-improvement and not self-actualization.

Illusory countertransference — Fordham's term for a practitioner's reaction arising from her own history rather than from the client. Contrast syntonic. The whole discipline of Mode Six is telling these apart.

Institutional transference — A client's transference to the organization, the sponsor, or the coaching program, which arrives in the room attached to the coach. Common in sponsored engagements. §6.3.

Isomorphism — Structural similarity between systems — the coaching relationship reproducing the shape of the client's workplace relationship, or supervision reproducing the shape of the coaching. One of the five proposed mechanisms of parallel process.

Mode Four (Eye Four) — In Hawkins's Seven-Eyed Model, the supervisor's attention to the *coach's* internal process. Where countertransference is examined. Session Seven.

Mode Five (Eye Five) — Attention to the supervisory relationship itself — where parallel process occurs.

Mode Six (Eye Six) — The supervisor's attention to her own here-and-now experience. Where parallel process is detected. Session Eight.

Nigredo — The blackening — the stage in the alchemical sequence Jung used to map the transference, corresponding to the point at which the relationship goes dark, stuck, or hopeless. Presented in this book as an expected phase rather than a failure. §3.7.

Parallel process — The reproduction, in the supervisory relationship, of a dynamic occurring in the coaching relationship — usually outside the awareness of both parties. Named by Searles (1955) as the reflection process. **A heuristic of high practical value and uncertain theoretical status; the evidence base is thin and this book says so.** Session Five.

Participation mystique — Jung's borrowing from Lévy-Bruhl for a state of partial psychological merger in which the boundary between two people's experience becomes indistinct. His account of how one person's unconscious material affects another.

Persona — The adapted social face — necessary, not false. Trouble arises from identification with it, not from having one.

Projection — Attributing to another person a quality that belongs, wholly or partly, to oneself. Ordinary, continuous, and not in itself a disorder.

Projective identification — Klein's concept, extended interpersonally: an unwanted part of the self is not merely attributed to another but *induced* in them, so that the other actually begins to feel or behave accordingly. The proposed mechanism that makes countertransference informative. Contested, and unnecessary for practical use.

Prospective function — Jung's claim that unconscious material — including projection — carries not only what has been repressed but what has not yet been lived. What a client projects onto a coach may be a capacity they have not yet claimed. §3.6.

Reflection process — Searles's original term for what is now called parallel process.

Role responsiveness — Sandler's concept: the client unconsciously offers a role, the practitioner unconsciously takes it up, and the enactment reveals the client's relational world. Yields the most useful working question in the book — *what role am I being invited into, and have I already accepted it?*

Rule of the Threshold — The governing boundary of this book: **in coaching, you may use what you notice; you may not go and get more.** Directional test — toward the present and the contracted goal is coaching; toward the past and the client's formation is therapy.

Selfobject transference — Kohut's three forms — mirroring (needing to be seen), idealizing (needing to admire), and twinship (needing to be alike). Frequently the most immediately recognizable frame for what happens in coaching.

Self (capital S) — In Jung, the organizing center and totality of the psyche, distinct from the ego. The goal-image of individuation rather than an achievable state.

Seven-Eyed Model — Hawkins and Shohet’s framework describing seven modes of attention available in supervision: the client, the coach’s interventions, the coaching relationship, the coach’s process, the supervisory relationship, the supervisor’s process, and the wider system.

Shadow — What a person has not integrated — characteristically encountered first in others, as strong irritation. Not the evil part of the psyche; the unlived part, which includes unlived good.

Syntonic countertransference — Fordham’s term for a practitioner’s reaction genuinely produced by the client’s material. Contrast illusory.

Thereapist — My own term, developed in *Coaching Damaged Emotions*: the coach whose primary instrument is her *thereness* rather than her technique. Presence as the intervention.

Transference — The client’s unconscious redirection onto the coach of feelings, expectations, and relational patterns formed elsewhere. Universal, continuous, and not a disorder. **In coaching it is to be noticed and worked with lightly — never cultivated, never interpreted.**

Transmuting internalization — Kohut’s account of how a client gradually takes in the functions a practitioner has been performing for them, so that the relationship becomes unnecessary. The proper aim of coaching.

Uncharacteristic Test — The central practical discipline of this book: the question is never “am I feeling something?” but “am I feeling something *unlike me, here, now?*” Requires knowing your baseline, which is what Inventory 1 is for.

Wounded healer — The archetypal pattern, developed by Jung and by Guggenbühl-Craig, in which healer and patient are two poles of a single configuration — and in which the helper’s own woundedness is both the source of her capacity and the site of her shadow.

C.2 Master Bibliography

Consolidated from the session bibliographies. Where an original publication date matters historically, it is given in the entry.

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“The instrument is sitting in every coaching room in the world, switched on, generating data continuously.”

— Closing, page reference in the Table of Contents

APPENDIX D

Twelve Worked Cases

The phenomena as they actually present — with what was noticed, what was done, and what went wrong.

BEFORE YOU READ THESE

About these cases. Every case here is a composite. Details of industry, gender, role, and circumstance have been altered and recombined so that no individual is identifiable. The dynamics are real; the people are not.

Why composites rather than single disguised cases. Because a single case disguised well enough to publish is usually disguised past the point of usefulness. Composites let me keep the clinical detail intact.

How to use them. Each case follows the same structure: the presentation, the data, the analysis, the intervention, and — the part usually omitted from teaching material — **what went wrong or nearly did**. Read the first three sections, stop, and form your own view before reading the fourth. The cases are considerably more useful that way.

Case One — The Client Who Agreed With Everything

Presentation

A coach brought a six-session engagement with a senior finance leader that she described as “going extremely well and going nowhere.” The client was engaged, prepared, warm, and complimentary. He completed every action he committed to. Nothing in his working life had changed.

The data

- The coach felt unusually competent in sessions and unusually flat afterward.
- The client had never disagreed with anything in six sessions.
- Actions were completed exactly as specified and never adapted.
- The coach noticed she had started preparing more than usual for this client — which was uncharacteristic.

The analysis

The absence of a single “no” across six sessions is the finding. This is Kohut’s idealizing transference in an ordinary corporate register: the client had organized the relationship so that the coach was the one who knew, which relieved him of the requirement to author anything.

The coach's flatness afterward is the concordant piece — she was feeling what the client could not feel in the room, which was that nothing was happening. Her increased preparation is the complementary piece: she had accepted the role of the one who supplies, and was working harder to supply better.

Note that the marker profile predicted this. Marker 4.4 was being technically satisfied — the coach was inviting response — and substantively defeated, because the client was constitutionally unable to decline. Marker 3.4 was consistently the coach's.

The intervention

Rung Three, in the seventh session:

THE NAMING

COACH: Can I say something about the two of us rather than about the work? In six sessions you've never once told me an idea of mine was wrong. Not once. And I notice I've been preparing harder for you than for anyone else I work with. I don't know what that adds up to. Does it mean anything to you?

CLIENT: *(pause)* I don't really disagree with people I'm paying.

COACH: What happens if you do?

CLIENT: *(longer pause)* I don't know. I've never tried it.

That last exchange opened the engagement. What followed — over the remaining sessions — was the client's recognition that he did not disagree with anyone above him in the organization either, which was the actual reason nothing was changing in his working life.

What nearly went wrong

The coach's first instinct had been to change her approach — harder questions, more challenge, a different model. She had a session plan built around a challenge framework. Had she used it, she would have supplied yet another thing for the client to agree with, and the compliance would have been confirmed rather than examined.

The general lesson. When a technique is not working, the temptation is a better technique. Very often the relationship is the problem, and no technique reaches it.

Case Two — The Coach Who Could Not Stop Rescuing

Presentation

A supervisee brought a client he described as “very fragile at the moment.” The client, a newly appointed director, was struggling and had cried in two of the last three sessions. The coach wanted to discuss whether to refer.

The data

- The supervisee spoke about this client with unusual protectiveness — “I don’t want to push her.”
- He had extended two sessions without charging.
- He had given her his mobile number.
- The supervisor noticed she was being careful with him — uncharacteristically careful.

The analysis

Two layers, and separating them was the whole work.

Layer one: the coach’s rescuing countertransference. Extended sessions, out-of-hours access, and reluctance to challenge are a recognizable cluster.

Layer two — and this is what made it interesting: the supervisor’s carefulness. She had checked her own state (fine), her own themes (protectiveness is not on her list), and the relationship (she was ordinarily robust with this supervisee). That left parallel process. The coach was treating the client as fragile; the supervisor was treating the coach as fragile.

The five-step chain, running exactly as described in Session One: the client’s transference had constellated the coach’s rescuing; the coach had brought the fragility into supervision, not by describing it but by *evoking* it; the supervisor’s carefulness was the evidence.

The intervention

The supervisor used Mode Six directly, and started with herself:

MODE SIX INTO MODE FOUR

SUPERVISOR: I want to name something. For the last twenty minutes I’ve been unusually careful with you — picking my words, softening things. That isn’t how we normally work. And I notice you’ve been describing being careful with her. I may be completely off. Does that land anywhere?

SUPERVISEE: (*pause*) God. Yes. And I’ve been careful with her because she cried, and I — I think I decided she couldn’t take anything.

SUPERVISOR: What made you decide that?

SUPERVISEE: Her crying. Just the crying.

SUPERVISOR: What does someone crying mean, for you?

That last question moved from Mode Six to Mode Four, and it produced the coach’s own material — which stayed in supervision, where it belonged, and did not go anywhere near the coaching room.

What went wrong

The supervisor asked one question too many. Having found the coach's material, she asked where it came from, and the coach began to talk about his mother.

She stopped it, correctly and slightly late: *"I think we've arrived somewhere that belongs in your own therapy rather than here. What I want to know is what you're going to do on Thursday."* The recovery was good. The excursion should not have happened, and the supervisor named it as her error in her own supervision the following month.

The general lesson. The boundary in Mode Four is not a wall you notice hitting. It is a slope, and the momentum of a productive conversation carries you down it. The protection is not vigilance; it is the habit of returning to the client's Thursday.

Case Three — The Boring Client

Presentation

A coach brought a client she found almost unbearably dull. She was embarrassed to raise it. The client was a competent operations manager working on stakeholder influence; the sessions were pleasant, thorough, and interminable.

The data

- The coach was checking the clock from about minute fifteen.
- She was not bored generally, and not bored with any other client.
- Her questions with this client had become generic — Marker 6.1 collapsing.
- The client had described being "overlooked" by his executive team.

The analysis

The fourth bullet is the case. The coach was not bored; she was *doing what the executive team did*. Complementary identification, in Racker's sense — she had taken up the position of everyone else in the client's system, and her boredom was the mechanism by which she occupied it.

This is the single most valuable move in the whole countertransference literature for coaches, and it is worth stating as a rule: **boredom with a client who reports being overlooked is not a fact about the client's interest level. It is the client's experience, reproduced in you.**

The intervention

The coach did not disclose the boredom — correctly. Disclosing "I find you boring" serves nobody. What she did instead was work the phenomenon from the other end:

WORKING THE COMPLEMENTARY POSITION

COACH: You said the exec team overlooks you. I want to get very specific. Think of the last meeting. What exactly happens — what do people do with their attention when you speak?

CLIENT: They wait. Politely. Until I finish.

COACH: And what are you doing while they wait?

CLIENT: *(pause)* Being thorough. Making sure I've covered it all.

The client's thoroughness — the very quality producing the coach's boredom — turned out to be a defense against being wrong in front of senior people. That became the engagement. His stakeholder influence improved within two months, not because he learned influencing techniques but because he stopped covering everything.

What nearly went wrong

The coach had been considering ending the engagement, and had drafted a message suggesting the client might be better served by someone else. She would have enacted the exact rejection the client experienced everywhere, and confirmed it — with the additional weight of a professional's judgment behind it.

The general lesson. The urge to end an engagement is data before it is a decision. Take it to supervision first, without exception.

Case Four — The Coach Who Was Told She Was Different

Presentation

A coach brought a client who had said, in the fourth session, that she was “the only person who really gets it — nobody else in my life listens like this.” The coach found the remark moving and was troubled by how much she had liked hearing it.

The data

- The coach had thought about the remark several times during the following week.
- She had begun to think of this client as her most rewarding.
- She had, without deciding to, stopped taking notes for this client.
- The client had recently cancelled a session with a friend to attend coaching.

The analysis

The third and fourth bullets matter more than the first two. Note-taking is a professional frame; dropping it is the frame relaxing. The client re-prioritizing a friendship in favor of coaching is a dependency indicator.

This is the “special client” pattern from Session Six — the most under-discussed countertransference in coaching, because it feels so much like good work. A coach being told

she is uniquely understanding is receiving something she wants, from a person who is paying her, in a relationship she controls.

It is worth being clear about what this is not. It is not a sign the coach has done anything wrong, and it is not a sign the coaching is bad. The client's experience may be entirely accurate — many people genuinely are not listened to. **The risk is not the client's statement. It is the coach's appetite for it.**

The intervention

In supervision, three things were established. First, the coach's own history with being needed — in supervision, not in the coaching. Second, a practical restoration of the frame: notes resumed, session length firm. Third, a piece of work with the client that the coach would otherwise not have done:

THE COUNTERMOVE

COACH: You said a few weeks ago that nobody else listens like this. I've been thinking about it. I'm glad this is useful — and I also want to be careful, because I'm one hour a fortnight and you have a whole life. Who else could listen to you like this, if you let them?

The client's answer took a long time and produced the most useful work of the engagement.

What went wrong

Nothing, in the end. But the coach had not brought this to supervision for eleven weeks, and her stated reason — which she offered with some difficulty — was that she had not wanted it examined.

The general lesson. Reluctance to bring something to supervision is the strongest single indicator that it needs to be brought. Session One's Reluctance Question exists for exactly this.

Case Five — The Session That Kept Being Cancelled

Presentation

A supervisee brought an administrative problem rather than a case. A client had rescheduled four times in three months, always with good reason, always apologetically. The coach wanted advice on contracting.

The data

- Four reschedules; each reason legitimate.
- The supervisee had been fifteen minutes late to this supervision session — for the first time in two years.
- The supervisor had, that morning, considered moving the supervision session herself.
- The client's stated coaching goal was "protecting time for strategic thinking."

The analysis

Three levels of the same phenomenon, which is what makes this case worth including. The client cannot protect time. The coach could not protect the supervision time. The supervisor was pulled toward not protecting it either.

This is systemic isomorphism — the fifth mechanism from Session Five — and it is the variety of parallel process that appears in structure rather than in feeling. It is also the easiest to miss, because nothing emotional happens. Nobody feels anything unusual. The shape repeats and everyone experiences their own version as a coincidence with a good reason attached.

Note the discipline that made this readable: the supervisor had two independent instances — the coach's lateness and her own impulse — before she named anything. One would not have been enough.

The intervention

The supervisor named the structure rather than any feeling:

NAMING A STRUCTURAL ECHO

SUPERVISOR: Something odd. Your client can't protect her time. You were late here for the first time in two years. And I nearly moved this session this morning. Three of us, same problem, in a chain. I don't want to make too much of it — but is it worth a look?

The work that followed was not about time management. It was about what the client's organization did to anyone who tried to protect thinking time — and what the coach had absorbed from that system without noticing.

What nearly went wrong

The supervisor almost answered the question asked. The supervisee wanted contracting advice, and there was perfectly good contracting advice available. It would have been useful, correct, and would have addressed the presented problem while leaving the actual one untouched.

The general lesson. The administrative question is frequently the case. When a supervisee brings logistics, ask what the logistics are made of.

Case Six — The Erotic Transference

Presentation

A coach brought, with considerable difficulty, a client whose manner toward him had become flirtatious — compliments about his appearance, requests to meet for coffee, a suggestion that they were “very similar people.” He had said nothing to the client and had been avoiding thinking about it.

The data

- The coach had changed what he wore for these sessions. He noticed this only when asked.
- He had scheduled the client last on the day.
- He had not brought it to supervision for two months.
- The client's presenting issue was a pattern of conflating professional and personal relationships at work.

The analysis

The fourth bullet re-frames the entire case. The client was doing in the coaching precisely what she had come to coaching about. This is Freud's 1914 observation in its purest coaching form: what cannot be remembered is repeated — or, in the version this book prefers, **what cannot be spoken about is enacted**.

The coach's wardrobe change and scheduling are the enactment on his side. Neither was decided. Both were behavioral, and both were available to observation once he was asked the right question.

Two things must be said plainly. First: the coach had done nothing wrong. Having a response is not a failure. Second: the two months of silence was the risk, and it was serious — not because of what might have happened, but because unexamined material of this kind reliably escalates.

The intervention

Supervision established three things, in this order: normalization (this is a known and expected phenomenon), examination of the coach's side (in supervision, thoroughly), and a boundary intervention with the client that did not name the transference.

BOUNDARY WITHOUT INTERPRETATION

COACH: I want to say something about how we work together. I'm going to keep this to the session, in this room, at these times — no coffees, no meeting outside. That's not about you; it's how I work with everyone. And I notice it connects to what you brought me in the first place — the blurring between professional and personal. I wonder if it's worth us looking at how that works, using something closer to hand than your team.

Note what this does and does not do. It restores the frame explicitly. It declines the invitation without shaming the client. It links to the contracted goal. And it does **not** say "you are attracted to me" or offer any account of why she is doing it. Rung Three, not Rung Five.

What went wrong

The two months. And the reason for the two months, which the coach eventually articulated: he was afraid his supervisor would think less of him.

The general lesson. This is Session Seven's point about shame, and it is a supervisor's responsibility rather than a supervisee's. A supervisor who has never explicitly said that attraction to clients is expected and discussable has, in effect, forbidden it.

Case Seven — The Group That Split

Presentation

In a group supervision of five coaches, a presenter brought a client in conflict with her CEO. Within ten minutes the group had divided: two members were firmly sympathetic to the client, two were making increasingly pointed observations about her behavior, and the fifth had gone quiet.

The data

- The split happened fast and did not match the group's usual dynamics.
- The two “prosecuting” members were normally the gentlest in the group.
- The silent member later said she had felt “frozen — like anything I said would be wrong.”
- The presenter had described her client's organization as “completely polarized about her.”

The analysis

The group had populated the client's system. This is the distribution phenomenon from Session Five, and it is common enough in group supervision that a supervisor who does not know to look for it will spend years mediating disagreements that are not disagreements.

Note the specific evidence that this was distribution rather than genuine difference: **the roles did not match the people**. The gentlest members were prosecuting. When group members behave uncharacteristically and the pattern maps onto the case, you are watching the case rather than the group.

The frozen member is the most informative of all. Somebody in the client's organization is silent and afraid, and nobody has mentioned them.

The intervention

The supervisor stopped the content discussion entirely and used the Sculpt Inquiry:

THE SCULPT INQUIRY

SUPERVISOR: I'm going to stop us. Something has happened in this room in ten minutes that I want to look at. Don't discuss the client for a moment. Instead — each of you, in one sentence: what position have you found yourself taking, and is it a familiar one for you?

The answers produced a map of the client's organization that the presenter recognized immediately, including the silent person, whom she had genuinely never mentioned and who turned out to be the client's deputy.

What nearly went wrong

The supervisor's first impulse was to manage the conflict — to slow the two challengers down and protect the presenter. Reasonable group facilitation, and it would have suppressed the single most useful piece of data the group produced that year.

The general lesson. In group supervision, conflict that arrives suddenly and does not fit the people is information, not a facilitation problem.

Case Eight — The Coach Who Went Blank

Presentation

An experienced PCC brought a session in which she had, in her words, “just stopped being able to coach.” Twenty minutes in, she had found herself with nothing to say, no questions available, and a rising sense of incompetence. She had recovered, awkwardly, and had been shaken by it.

The data

- It had happened once before, with the same client, six weeks earlier.
- It happened both times at roughly the same point in the conversation.
- The client was describing a redundancy process she was leading.
- The coach had no personal history with redundancy.

The analysis

De-skilling — the countertransference pattern from Session Six in which a competent practitioner temporarily loses access to her own competence. It is one of the most alarming experiences in coaching and one of the most informative.

The repetition at the same point is what makes this readable. Random incompetence does not have a schedule. The coach was going blank at the moment the client described making people redundant — and the client, it emerged, had described the process in entirely procedural language, with no reference at any point to the people involved.

The blankness was the client's. Not the client's conscious experience — her conscious experience was efficient and organized. The blank was what she had done with the unbearable part, and the coach was holding it. Bion's container, receiving something the client could not process.

The intervention

The coach did not disclose the blankness. What she did instead, in the following session, was ask the question the blankness pointed at:

THE QUESTION THE BLANKNESS POINTED AT

COACH: You’ve described the process to me three times now, very clearly. Can I ask something different? What’s it like — for you — to be the person doing this?

CLIENT: (*long silence*) Nobody has asked me that.

What nearly went wrong

The coach had concluded that she was insufficiently experienced for senior clients and had considered declining that level of work. A genuine professional loss, narrowly avoided, arising from an entirely mistaken reading of an ordinary phenomenon.

The general lesson. De-skilling in an experienced coach is almost never about the coach’s skill. Look for what the client cannot feel.

Case Nine — The Sponsor in the Room

Presentation

A coach on a large organizational contract brought a client who was, she said, “coaching me rather than the other way round” — managing the sessions, providing polished updates, and treating each meeting as a report.

The data

- The client arrived with a written agenda each time. Nobody had asked for one.
- The coach felt like an auditor and disliked the feeling.
- The coaching had been assigned rather than chosen.
- The client had asked twice what would be reported back to HR.

The analysis

Institutional transference, in its most common form. The client was not relating to this coach; she was relating to *the organization that sent her*, and the coach was the organization’s representative in the room whatever the confidentiality agreement said.

The coach’s auditor feeling is complementary and precise — she had been placed in the role the client experienced her employer as occupying. Note that the client asked about reporting twice and the coach answered the question both times, correctly, and it made no difference.

Institutional transference is not resolved by information.

The intervention

NAMING THE THIRD PARTY

COACH: I want to name something I’m noticing. You bring an agenda every time — nobody asked for that — and I find myself sitting here feeling a bit like an auditor. Which isn’t what I

want to be and I don't think it's what you want either. I wonder whether some of the company has come into the room with us.

The client's response — that she had assumed the coaching was “part of a process” and had been managing it accordingly — changed the engagement entirely. It also produced a piece of organizational information the coach fed back, in aggregated form and with permission, to the sponsor: that assigned coaching was being experienced as performance management.

What went wrong

The coach had spent three sessions trying to build rapport, on the assumption that the formality was personal reticence. It was not personal at all.

The general lesson. In sponsored work, ask early what the client believes coaching is *for* and who they think asked for it. The answer is frequently not what the sponsor told you.

Case Ten — The Supervisor Who Liked Being Right

Presentation

This one is mine, and I include it because everything else in this appendix describes other people.

A supervisee brought a stuck case. I offered a parallel process reading — a good one, well-constructed, and she took it up with enthusiasm. Over the next two sessions she brought material that confirmed it. I was pleased. The client did not improve.

The data

- My formulation had been offered in the first twenty minutes of the first session on the case.
- The supervisee had accepted it immediately and completely.
- Subsequent sessions produced supporting evidence and no disconfirming evidence.
- I had told a colleague about it.

The analysis

The fourth bullet is the one that should have stopped me, and I offer it as a diagnostic worth borrowing: **if you find yourself telling colleagues about your own insight, examine the insight.**

What had actually happened was Doehrman's downward parallel process. My formulation had become the organizing idea of the supervision, the supervisee had adopted it, and she was now conducting the coaching in the shape of my idea. The client had a coach who was working my hypothesis rather than the client's reality.

My grandiosity — 8.3, first entry — was the engine. The supervisee's immediate and total acceptance was the warning, and I read it as confirmation because I wanted to.

The intervention

It came from my own supervisor, who asked what disconfirming evidence I had encountered. I had none, in three sessions, on a complex case. That is not what accurate formulations look like.

I took it back:

THE RETRACTION

ME: I want to withdraw something. That reading I gave you three sessions ago — I think I was too pleased with it, and I think you took it on because I was confident rather than because it fit. Can we start again, and this time you tell me what's happening and I'll keep my formulations to myself for a while?

What went wrong

A client received three months of coaching organized around a supervisor's idea. He was not harmed. He was not helped either, and he paid for it.

The general lesson. Everything in Session Eight, and particularly this: the supervisee's enthusiastic agreement is not evidence. It is the thing to be suspicious of.

Case Eleven — The Referral That Was Made Well

Presentation

A coach brought a client whose material had moved steadily toward a bereavement three years earlier. The client wanted to keep working on her stated goal — career direction — and kept arriving at her father's death.

The data

- The bereavement had come up in four consecutive sessions, unprompted.
- The client became distressed each time and apologized each time.
- The coach felt she could help, and noticed she wanted to.
- Career progress had stalled completely.

The analysis

This is a scope decision, and it is included precisely because nothing went wrong — which makes it rarer in teaching material than it should be.

The Rule of the Threshold gives the answer cleanly. The material was arriving unbidden, which is permitted; the client wanted to work on it, which is not the coach's decision to grant; and the

direction of travel was toward the past and the client's formation rather than toward the present and the contracted goal. That is the therapy side of the line.

The coach's wish to help was noted in supervision as her own material and did not enter the decision.

The intervention

THE REFERRAL

COACH: I want to say something about what keeps happening. Your dad has come into every one of the last four sessions, and every time you apologize for it. I don't think you need to apologize — I think it's telling us something. And I want to be straight with you: grief is not what I'm trained for. I don't think you'd be well served by me trying.

What I'd like to suggest is two things running alongside each other. You see someone who does this properly — I can suggest two or three people — and you and I keep working on the career question, which is real and which I *am* trained for. This isn't me handing you on. I'm still here.

Note the five elements from Session 6.7 all present: naming the pattern without shame, honest statement of the coach's limits, a specific onward route, continuation of the coaching where legitimate, and explicit reassurance against abandonment.

What could have gone wrong

Two things, and both are common. The coach could have continued — competently, kindly, and outside her scope. Or she could have ended the engagement, which the client would have experienced as a second loss.

The general lesson. Referral is not ending. The most common error in coaching referrals is treating them as a transfer rather than an addition.

Case Twelve — The Assessment That Went Wrong

Presentation

A PCC candidate failed her performance evaluation twice. Her mentor coach, who had heard her work regularly, was baffled: her ordinary coaching was clearly at standard.

The data

- In her ordinary sessions, coach airtime was around 25 percent. In her submitted recordings it was near 45.
- The submissions contained no silences longer than two seconds.
- Questions were stacked — three at a time — in a way that never occurred in her practice.
- She had chosen her two most articulate clients for the recordings.

The analysis

The candidate had a transference to the assessment, and it produced exactly the marker profile Appendix A predicts for a coach anxious about her own value: 5.5, 6.7, 7.6, and 7.8 all failing together, in a coach who demonstrates all four reliably when no one is scoring.

The fourth bullet compounded it. Articulate clients need less, so there was less for her to do, which increased the pressure to demonstrate competence, which filled the space.

This is worth taking seriously as a professional issue rather than an individual one. **The assessment is a relationship, and candidates have transferences to it.** A credentialing process that produces performance anxiety measures, in part, the candidate's response to being measured.

The intervention

Not more marker training — she knew the markers. Three things instead:

168. The airtime comparison, shown to her as a chart. Data she could not argue with.

169. A single instruction for the third recording: *count to five before every response, and submit whatever happens.*

170. A client who genuinely needed the space — not the most articulate one.

She passed comfortably. Her own account afterward was that she had spent the first two attempts “proving I could coach instead of coaching.”

The general lesson

Repeated marker failure in a demonstrably competent coach is a relational finding, not a skills finding. Mentor coaching addresses the skill; it cannot reach the anxiety. That belongs in supervision — and per Session 7.4, it should not be the same person doing both.

D.13 Using These Cases in Training

Four formats that work.

Stop-and-predict. Distribute presentation, data, and analysis. Groups predict the intervention before reading it. The value is in the divergence between what people propose and what was done — particularly the frequency with which experienced coaches propose Rung Five interventions without noticing.

Cases without analysis. Distribute presentation and data only. Groups produce their own analysis and are asked for the disconfirming evidence they would look for. This is the harder and better exercise.

Role-played disclosure. Participants deliver the intervention aloud, in their own words, to a partner playing the client. Nobody discovers how difficult Rung Three language is until they have to say it with a face opposite them.

The error hunt. Read only the “what went wrong” sections, as a set. They are the most instructive part of the appendix and the part most training material omits.

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APPENDIX E

Modes of Learning

How to teach this material — formats, designs, and the things that go wrong.

This appendix is for trainers, supervisors of groups, faculty on coach-training programs, and anyone using this book with other people rather than alone. It assumes you already know the content and need to know how to deliver it.

It also contains a warning that I want at the front rather than buried: **this material is more affecting to teach than it looks on the page.** Participants regularly encounter something about themselves in these sessions. Design for that, or do not run it.

E.1 What Kind of Learning This Is

The single most common failure in teaching this material is treating it as knowledge transfer. It is not. Consider what participants are actually being asked to do.

Layer	What is being learned	How it is learned	How long it takes
Conceptual	The vocabulary, the history, the distinctions. What transference is; who Racker was; what parallel process claims.	Reading, lecture, discussion. Straightforward.	Hours.
Perceptual	The ability to notice one's own state while doing something else — the second channel.	Repeated structured practice with immediate prompting. Cannot be lectured.	Months.
Dispositional	The willingness to say difficult true things about oneself to another person, and to hear them.	Only through being in a group or relationship where it is modeled, safe, and expected.	Years, and never finished.

A program that delivers only the first layer produces coaches who can define countertransference and cannot notice their own. That is the current default in coach education, and it is worse than useless, because it supplies the vocabulary for a competence the coach does not have.

Design implication. Allocate no more than a quarter of contact time to the conceptual layer, however much material there is. The other three quarters go to practice and to structured disclosure.

E.2 Four Program Designs

Design One — The Eight-Session Module (24 hours)

The book's native format. Suits supervision training, advanced coach development, and CPD cohorts of 8–14.

Each session runs three hours in three movements:

- **Movement one (45 min) — the concept.** Facilitator input, kept tight. Participants have pre-read the session, so this is orientation and question-taking, not delivery.
- **Movement two (75 min) — the practice.** The session's exercises, run in triads. Facilitator circulates and does not join.
- **Movement three (60 min) — the harvest.** Whole group. Not “what did you learn” but “what did you notice in yourself, and what surprised you?”

Between sessions: one inventory, one live-practice commitment, one written reflection of no more than 300 words. Longer reflections produce essays; short ones produce honesty.

Design Two — The Two-Day Intensive

For established practitioners. Compresses badly but works if the compression is honest about what it drops.

Block	Content	Dropped
Day 1 AM	Sessions One and Two compressed — the unconscious as data, the instrument problem, the Freudian inheritance and its contradiction.	Most of the pre-history; the Dora detail.
Day 1 PM	Sessions Three and Four compressed — Jung's system, complexes, projection; Racker's sort and Sandler's question.	The alchemical sequence; most of Act One and Act Three.
Day 2 AM	Sessions Five and Six — parallel process, the eight forms, the ladder, the red lines. Do not compress the ladder.	The evidence-base discussion, moved to reading.
Day 2 PM	Sessions Seven and Eight — Mode Four techniques, Mode Six discipline, live practice.	Group supervision material; the supervisor's shadow, moved to reading.

The honest caveat, which should be said to participants on the first morning: two days delivers the conceptual layer and opens the perceptual one. It does not deliver competence, and a participant who leaves believing otherwise is more dangerous than when they arrived.

Design Three — The Supervision Group Curriculum (12 months)

The best format, and the slowest. The material is folded into ongoing group supervision rather than taught separately.

Twenty minutes at the start of each monthly session, following the Appendix B program: a concept, an instrument, and a commitment. The remaining time is ordinary supervision — in which the concept then appears live, which is the entire point.

The advantage over a taught module is decisive: participants encounter each phenomenon in their own work within weeks of learning to name it. The disadvantage is that it requires a supervisor who can work all seven modes and who is willing to be visibly wrong in front of the group.

Design Four — The Marker-Anchored Program

For credentialing preparation. Appendix A is the spine; the sessions are resources drawn on as needed.

Structure it around the candidate's own recordings. Each meeting: one recording, marker feedback, then the question *what was happening in you at that moment?* The concepts enter only when a specific pattern calls for them.

The essential boundary, and it must be built into the design rather than left to the facilitator's judgment: whoever gives marker feedback should not be the person who explores the coach's inner life. Two roles, and preferably two people. Where resources force one person to do both, the roles should be explicitly announced and separated in time — "I'm going to stop being your mentor coach for the next twenty minutes."

E.3 Facilitation Notes

Contracting the group

Do this properly, in the first hour, or spend the whole program managing its absence. Five things must be explicit:

- 171. What is shared stays here.** Stated plainly, agreed aloud by each person individually rather than by nodding.
- 172. Nobody is required to disclose anything.** Participation is real, disclosure is optional, and passing is an acceptable answer to any question.
- 173. This is not therapy and I am not your therapist.** Say it in the first hour and mean it. Say what you will do if something opens that belongs elsewhere.
- 174. Participants may name what is happening in the group.** Including about the facilitator. Especially about the facilitator.
- 175. What happens if someone is affected.** Name the actual provision — a break, a conversation, a route onward.

Modeling before requiring

The most powerful single facilitation move available in this material: **disclose first, and disclose something real**. A facilitator who describes a client she disliked, an occasion she was de-skilled, a formulation she got badly wrong, sets the floor for the group. A facilitator who asks for disclosure without providing any sets a different floor, and gets performances.

The disclosure must be genuine and it must be about you. Anonymized third-party stories do not have this effect — participants can hear the difference immediately.

Managing the participant who is affected

It will happen, in most groups, at Session Three or Session Six. Someone will encounter something in themselves that is larger than the exercise.

What works:

- Notice early, before the group does. Watch for withdrawal rather than for tears.
- Offer privately at the next natural break rather than intervening publicly.
- Do not explore it. Ask what they need and what would help them stay or leave well.
- If they wish to continue, let them. Being sent away is worse than being uncomfortable.
- Follow up afterward. One message, two days later.

What does not work: pursuing it in front of the group, whatever the pedagogical temptation, and however willing the participant appears in the moment. A group is not a container for an individual's material, and a participant who agrees to explore something publicly at the moment of being affected has not consented in any meaningful sense.

Working with resistance to the material

Expect three objections, and welcome them — they are more useful than agreement.

“This is therapy, not coaching.” The best response is the ladder and Marker 7.5. The ICF explicitly asks coaches to share intuitions and feelings; that is the professional standard, not a psychoanalytic import. Then draw the line at Rung Five and mean it.

“Where is the evidence?” Do not defend. Session Five states the case honestly and the honesty is the answer. A participant who presses this is doing exactly what a professional should do, and the group benefits from watching a facilitator concede a weak evidence base without abandoning a useful practice.

“I don’t have these reactions.” This one requires care. It is usually true as stated — the person does not *notice* having them — and confrontation produces defensiveness. The productive route is the Uncharacteristic Audit rather than argument: ask them to bring five sessions’ worth of observations next time. The data does the work.

Triads: composition and rotation

Triads rather than pairs, throughout. The observer role is where most of the learning happens, and pairs eliminate it.

Rotate composition every session. Groups that stay fixed develop a comfortable culture within three meetings and stop producing anything difficult — which is the twinship dynamic from Session Six operating at group level, and worth naming as such when it happens.

E.4 Session-Specific Notes

Session	What it needs	Where it goes wrong
One	Time on the doorway exercise. Participants must have a felt experience before any theory.	Facilitators over-explain the framework and lose the phenomenon.
Two	The contradiction, held open. Do not resolve Freud for them.	Turning it into a history lecture. Keep asking “which one do <i>you</i> believe?”
Three	Extra time, and care. This session affects people.	Rushing the shadow exercise. It needs 45 minutes and a proper close.
Four	Ruthless compression. Twelve theorists is too many to deliver.	Completeness. Teach Heimann, Racker, and Sandler properly; list the rest.
Five	The honest evidence discussion, in full.	Over-selling parallel process. Participants who are sold it see it everywhere.
Six	The ladder, drilled aloud. This is the practical core of the book.	Discussing the ladder instead of practicing it. They must say the words.
Seven	Live demonstration by the facilitator, with a real supervisee.	Techniques taught as a list. Twelve techniques discussed teach nothing.
Eight	Facilitator vulnerability. Case Ten in Appendix D is the model.	Supervisors defending their own practice. If nobody in the room admits a shadow, nobody learns.

E.5 Assessing Learning

A difficulty worth naming: the learning that matters here is largely invisible and cannot be tested by examination. A participant can score full marks on the vocabulary and have learned nothing.

Four assessment approaches that do work, in ascending order of usefulness.

- 176. The recorded session with reflective commentary.** Not “what did you do” but “what was happening in you, and what did you do with it?” Assess the quality of the noticing, not the quality of the coaching.
- 177. The disconfirmation essay.** Present a formulation about a client, then present the evidence against it and what you did to test it. This assesses the exact discipline the book argues for and is very hard to fake.

178. The supervision recording. For supervisor training: a recorded supervision session with commentary on the supervisor's own Mode Six activity. The gold standard, and rarely used because it is exposing.

179. The twelve-month re-inventory. Inventory 1 completed at the start and end, with a written account of what moved and what did not. The only instrument here that measures change rather than performance.

What not to assess: the content of anyone's disclosure. The moment participants believe their self-revelation is being marked, they will produce the disclosure that scores well, and the program becomes an exercise in performed vulnerability — which is a worse outcome than no disclosure at all.

E.6 A Facilitator's Self-Check

Before running this material with a group, answer these honestly.

- Do I have my own supervision, currently and actively?
- Can I describe a client I disliked, out loud, to this group?
- Can I describe a serious error of my own in this territory?
- Do I know what happens in me when a participant becomes distressed?
- Do I know where I would refer someone, today, by name?
- Am I clear about the difference between running a training group and running a therapy group — not conceptually, but in what I would actually do at 2:40 on the second afternoon?
- Who will I debrief this program with?

THE CONDITION

If you answered no to the first or the last, do not run it yet.

This is not a formality. A facilitator working this material without her own supervision is asking a group to do something she is not doing, using an instrument she is not calibrating, with no one watching. Everything Session Eight says about the regress applies to the front of the room as much as to the supervisor's chair.

References for Appendix E

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APPENDIX F

Questions and Objections

The things coaches actually ask, answered as directly as I can manage.

These are the questions that come up when this material is taught. Several of them are objections rather than questions, and the objections are the better ones. I have tried to answer without defending.

On Scope and Boundary

“Isn’t this just therapy with a different name?”

No, and the distinction is not a matter of degree.

Therapy works with the *origin* of a pattern. Coaching works with the *presence* of it. A therapist may legitimately ask where a client learned to defer to authority and follow that back through a life. A coach may notice that a client defers to her, name it, and ask what it costs him in his current role.

Same phenomenon; entirely different operation. The Rule of the Threshold is the working test: use what you notice, do not go and get more. If you find yourself asking a question whose answer lies in the client’s formation rather than in their present, you have crossed.

“My clients hire me for business results. This is irrelevant.”

The business results are the point. Every case in Appendix D ends in a business outcome — a director who stopped covering everything and started influencing, a leader who learned to disagree, a client who could finally protect thinking time.

What is being argued is not that coaching should become more psychological. It is that **the relational field is already operating and already affecting the results**, and a coach who cannot read it is working with an instrument she does not know is on.

“Where exactly is the line?”

Four tests, applied together.

- **Direction.** Toward the present and the contracted goal, or toward the past and the client’s formation?
- **Source.** Did this arrive on its own, or did I go looking for it?
- **Competence.** Would I know what to do if this opened fully?
- **Purpose.** Does working this serve what the client contracted for, or does it serve my interest in it?

If you cannot answer all four cleanly, you are on the line rather than over it — which is a supervision question, not an emergency.

“What if the client asks me to go deeper?”

The client’s permission does not extend your competence. This needs saying because coaches sometimes treat client consent as the relevant boundary, and it is not. A client cannot authorize you to practice outside your training.

What you can say: *“I can see why you’d want to, and I want to be honest that it isn’t what I’m trained for. What I can do is...”* Then offer what you can do, and the route to what you cannot.

On Evidence and Theory

“Parallel process sounds unfalsifiable. Is it real?”

The honest answer is that the evidence is thin and the objection is a good one.

What can be said: the phenomenon has been independently described by practitioners across several decades and several traditions; Doehrmann’s 1976 study found it in every pair examined; and its practical use — as a prompt to look somewhere — does not require the theory to be correct.

What cannot be said: that it has an agreed operational definition, that it has been demonstrated under controlled conditions, or that confirmation bias has been ruled out. It has not.

My position, stated plainly: treat it as a hypothesis generator with a bad reputation to protect. It earns its place by producing questions that turn out to be useful, and it should be abandoned in any instance where the questions do not.

“Do I have to accept Freudian theory to use this?”

No. Session One separates two claims deliberately. **Claim A:** mental processes operate outside awareness and affect behavior. **Claim B:** Freud’s specific metapsychology — drives, the structural model, infantile sexuality — is correct.

Claim A is not seriously disputed by anyone and is supported by a large modern literature that has nothing to do with psychoanalysis. Everything practical in this book rests on Claim A. Claim B is optional and I have not asked you to accept it.

“Isn’t Jung unscientific?”

Parts of it, yes — and the parts used here are the empirical ones.

The Word Association Experiment was laboratory work with measurable outcomes. The concept of a complex is well-evidenced under other names in contemporary psychology. Projection is uncontroversial. Psychological type has a substantial, if contested, research literature.

The collective unconscious and the archetypes are metaphysical claims that cannot be tested as stated, and nothing in this book requires them. Where I have used the alchemical material in Session Three, I have used it as a *map of relational stages*, not as a claim about the psyche's architecture.

On Practice

“How do I know whether a feeling is mine or the client's?”

You often do not, and certainty is not available. What is available is a procedure.

180. Baseline. Is this characteristic of me generally?

181. Specificity. Does it occur with this client and not with others?

182. Timing. Did it start before the session or during it — and at what moment?

183. Convergence. Does another instrument — a supervisor, a body sensation, a pattern in the client's system — point the same way?

184. Testability. What would show me I am wrong?

Two or more converging is a working hypothesis. One is a hunch. None is your own material until proven otherwise.

“I don't notice any of this. Am I doing it wrong?”

You are noticing. You are not yet *registering* what you notice, which is a different thing and is trainable.

The most reliable entry point is the body rather than the emotions. Emotions are interpreted before they reach awareness; sensation is not. Start with Exercise 4.3 and the three-point check from Session 8.4. Most coaches find that eight to ten weeks of this produces the first clear instance, and that the instances accumulate quickly afterward.

“What if I name something and I'm wrong?”

Then you are wrong, you say so, and you move on. This is why the grammar in Session Five matters so much — an observation offered as a hypothesis, in the first person, with a question attached, costs almost nothing when it misses.

“That may be entirely mine — does it land at all?” “No.” *“Fair enough.”* That exchange is not a failure. It takes eight seconds, demonstrates Marker 7.5 exactly as written, and leaves the relationship stronger than a coach who never risks anything.

The damage comes from *asserted* interpretation, not from wrong observation.

“I work with teams, not individuals. Does any of this apply?”

More, not less. A team has more relationships, more projection, and — critically — the capacity to distribute a dynamic across members so that no individual carries it. The Sculpt Inquiry from Session Five was developed for exactly this.

One addition for team coaches: **your co-coach relationship is data**. If you and your colleague find yourselves disagreeing about a team in a way that does not fit how you usually work together, you have very likely absorbed a split that belongs to the team. Debrief it every time.

“How do I bring this up in supervision without sounding self-indulgent?”

This question is worth answering carefully because the fear behind it stops a great deal of useful work.

Try: *“I want to bring something about me rather than about the client, because I think it’s getting in the way.”* That single framing does all the work — it announces the mode, states the purpose, and connects it to the client.

And notice: the fear of self-indulgence is itself worth examining. Coaches who worry about taking up space in supervision frequently take up too little, and that pattern usually appears in their coaching too.

On Supervision

“My supervisor doesn’t work this way. What do I do?”

Ask for it. Most supervisors can work Mode Four and many simply have not been asked, because supervisees bring cases and supervisors respond to what is brought.

Say: *“I’d like some of our time to be about what happens in me, not just about the client. Is that something we can contract for?”* If the answer is no, or if it is yes and nothing changes over three sessions, consider whether this is the right supervisor for the stage you are at. That is not disloyalty; it is the ordinary business of a developing practice.

“Can mentor coaching do this instead? It’s cheaper.”

No, and the reason is structural rather than about quality.

Mentor coaching develops competence against a standard. Supervision examines the practitioner. When the same person does both, the supervisee is disclosing vulnerability to someone who is also evaluating her — and she will, reasonably, disclose less. Session 7.4 states this as a rule: **a relationship that assesses cannot do full Mode Four work**.

Both are needed. They are not substitutes and the confusion between them is one of the weaker features of current coaching infrastructure.

“I’m a supervisor. Do I really need my own supervision?”

Yes, and the argument is at 8.7, so I will only restate the conclusion.

The regress does not terminate in a person who has become able to see her own unconscious process. What is unconscious is not available to introspection at any level of seniority. An MCC with twenty-five years of practice has a much better map and exactly the same blind spot.

On the Wider Profession

“Why isn’t this in mainstream coach training?”

Three reasons, and I think all three are real.

The differentiation history. Coaching established itself by distinguishing itself from therapy, and the distinction was drawn at the level of vocabulary rather than at the level of operation. Anything sounding psychoanalytic was therefore excluded, including things that were not therapy at all.

Trainability. The conceptual layer can be taught in a day; the perceptual layer takes months and requires supervision. Programs sell what can be delivered inside a program.

Legitimate caution. Coaches working with unconscious material without training or supervision would be a genuine problem. The caution is well-founded. The response — silence — is not, because it produces coaches who are affected by dynamics they have never heard named.

“Isn’t there a risk this makes coaches worse?”

Yes. It is a real risk and it deserves a straight answer rather than reassurance.

A coach who half-learns this material will over-interpret, over-disclose, and mistake her own reactions for insight into her clients. She will use the vocabulary as a substitute for the discipline. She will find parallel process in every awkward supervision session. Some readers of this book will do exactly that.

Three things reduce the risk, and they are the reason the book is shaped as it is: the ladder, which keeps interventions low; the red lines, which are absolute; and supervision, which is the only actual safeguard. **The material is not safe to hold alone.** That is stated in the preface, in Session Six, in Session Eight, and here, because it is the one thing I would want carried out of the whole book.

“What should change in the profession?”

Four things, offered as my own view rather than as consensus.

- 185. Supervision should be a requirement of credentialing, not a recommendation.** It is the profession’s only structural safeguard and it is currently optional.

- 186. Mentor coaching and supervision should be formally distinguished** in standards and in practice, with the assessment boundary made explicit.
- 187. Coach training should name these phenomena** — even briefly, even without teaching their use — so that a coach who encounters one knows it has a name and is not evidence of her inadequacy.
- 188. Supervisors should be required to hold their own supervision.** In parts of the European tradition this is assumed. In coaching it is patchy, and the patchiness is a risk carried by clients who never hear about it.

The Last Question

“What if I just ignore all this?”

You can. Many good coaches do, and some of them are better at this work than people who have read a great deal about it, because they are naturally attentive and honest and have the habits without the vocabulary.

But you will not be *outside* the phenomena. You will be inside them without instrumentation. Your clients will still cast you, you will still respond, your supervision will still reproduce your coaching, and all of it will still shape the outcomes your clients pay for. The only question ignoring it settles is whether you get to know.

“You have never been outside the reaction. You have only, until now, been outside the noticing.”

— Closing

APPENDIX G

The Seven Modes in Full

A working reference to the whole model — drawn from The Coaching Super-Vision Journey and extended.

Sessions Seven and Eight treated Modes Four and Six at length and left the other five as context. This appendix supplies the whole model as a working reference, with the material on each mode that a practicing supervisor actually needs: what it covers, what it is for, the questions that open it, the techniques that work in it, how the three phenomena appear in it, and how it fails.

Much of what follows is drawn from and extends the supervision material in my *The Coaching Super-Vision Journey*, where the model is treated as the organizing structure of supervisory practice. Readers working through that volume can use this appendix as the relational overlay to it.

WHOSE MODEL THIS IS

Attribution. The Seven-Eyed Model is the work of Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet, first published in *Supervision in the Helping Professions* (1985) and developed across five editions since. The framework is theirs. The treatment below is my own reading of it for coaching supervision, and any error in it is mine rather than theirs.

Serious users of the model should go to the primary source. It repays it.

G.1 The Model at a Glance

Mode	Focus of attention	Core question	Where our three phenomena sit
One	The client and their situation	Who is this person and what is happening for them?	Transference is described here — as content.
Two	The coach's interventions	What did the coach do, and what else was available?	Countertransference shows in the <i>pattern</i> of interventions.
Three	The coaching relationship	What is happening between coach and client?	Transference lives here. The primary mode for our material.
Four	The coach's own process	What is happening in the coach?	Countertransference lives here.
Five	The supervisory relationship	What is happening between coach and supervisor?	Parallel process occurs here.
Six	The supervisor's own process	What is happening in the supervisor?	Parallel process is detected here. Supervisor's countertransference.

Mode	Focus of attention	Core question	Where our three phenomena sit
Seven	The wider system and context	What forces are acting on all of this?	Institutional transference; systemic isomorphism.

Three observations before the modes themselves, and they are the ones I would want a supervisor to carry.

The modes are not stages. There is no correct sequence. A skilled supervisor moves between them continuously, often several times in a minute, and the movement is the skill rather than the coverage.

Most supervision happens in Modes One and Two. This is the single most common finding when supervisors audit their own practice, and it is not a criticism — those modes are useful. But a supervisor working only there is doing consultancy on cases, and the coach's development is largely untouched.

The modes have different disclosure economics. Modes One, Two, and Seven cost the supervisee almost nothing to enter. Modes Three and Four cost something. Mode Five costs both parties. This is why practice clusters where it does, and it is a fact about human beings rather than about skill.

G.2 Mode One — The Client

Attention on the client: who they are, their situation, their system, what they bring, what they want.

What it is for

Establishing the ground. A supervisor cannot work usefully in any other mode without a picture of who is being coached. Mode One also serves a function that is easy to overlook: it lets the supervisee tell the story, which they usually need to do before anything else becomes possible.

Questions that open it

- Describe them to me — not the issue, the person.
- What do they want, and what do they say they want?
- Who else is in their world, and what do those people want from them?
- What have you not told me about them?
- If they were sitting here, what would they say I've got wrong?

How our material appears

Transference appears in Mode One as *reported content* — the client’s pattern of relating to others, described. This is legitimate and useful data. What the mode cannot do is show you the transference operating in the coaching, because the coach is not in the frame.

There is a subtler and more valuable use. **The coach’s description of the client is itself countertransference data.** Listen to how the client is being portrayed — the adjectives, the sympathy or its absence, what is emphasized and what is skipped. A supervisor who asks “what kind of person am I being given here?” is working Mode Four through Mode One.

How it fails

Mode One expands to fill all available time. Case description is comfortable for both parties, requires nothing of the coach, and feels productive. A supervision session that is forty minutes of Mode One and twenty of everything else has been captured — and the capture is usually a joint avoidance rather than the supervisee’s fault.

The correction: ten minutes, then move. If the picture is incomplete you can return.

G.3 Mode Two — The Coach’s Interventions

Attention on what the coach did: the questions asked, the choices made, the alternatives not taken.

What it is for

Skill development, in the ordinary sense. This is the mode closest to mentor coaching and the one most familiar to coaches from their training.

Questions that open it

- What did you actually say?
- What were you hoping would happen?
- What else could you have done at that moment?
- What stopped you doing that?
- If you had that thirty seconds again?

How our material appears

The fourth question is the hinge and the reason Mode Two matters more than its reputation suggests. *What stopped you?* converts a technical review into a relational one, and it is the cheapest available route from Mode Two into Mode Four — cheap because it arrives via behavior rather than via feeling, which most supervisees find much easier to enter.

Countertransference is also visible in the *pattern* of interventions rather than in any single one. A coach whose questions with a particular client are consistently softer, harder, faster, or more

generic than her norm is showing you something. The Appendix A distortion index is a Mode Two instrument for exactly this reason.

How it fails

Two failure modes. The supervisor becomes a mentor coach and starts teaching — which is legitimate work but is not supervision and should be named as a switch, not slid into. Or the review becomes forensic: a supervisee taken through her session line by line will defend, and a defending supervisee is not learning.

The correction: ask what stopped her, not what she should have done.

G.4 Mode Three — The Coaching Relationship

Attention on what happens between coach and client — the relationship as an entity, rather than either party.

What it is for

This is the primary mode for the material of this book, and the most under-used of the seven. It asks the supervisee to step outside the relationship and look at it, which is a genuinely difficult act of imagination and one that most coaches have never been asked to perform.

Questions that open it

- If I had watched that session with the sound off, what would I have seen?
- What is the relationship *like*? Give me an image.
- What kind of pair are you? Who does what?
- What has become normal between you that would look odd to an outsider?
- What can't be said between you?
- If the relationship itself could speak, what would it complain about?

Techniques that work here

The image invitation. Ask for a metaphor for the relationship and take it seriously. “A teacher and a bright pupil.” “Two people being very polite in a lift.” “A doctor and someone who doesn't want to be examined.” Coaches produce these readily and they carry more information than paragraphs of description.

The empty chair, lightly. “If she were here, what would she say about how the two of you work together?” Not role-play; a single question.

The normality audit. “What happens in your sessions that you've stopped noticing?” Drift lives here — extended sessions, unbilled time, a running joke, a topic that never comes up.

The absent element. “What has never happened between you?” Never disagreed. Never laughed. Never been silent. Never talked about the work itself. Absences are more diagnostic than presences and almost nobody asks.

How our material appears

All of it, in the form the coach can most easily work with. Transference is visible here as a *shape* rather than as a theory — “teacher and pupil” is Kohut’s idealizing transference in language a coach can use on Thursday without any psychoanalytic apparatus at all.

This is the argument for Mode Three as the coaching profession’s natural home for this material. It requires no clinical vocabulary, stays entirely in the present, involves no claims about the client’s history, and produces directly actionable observations. A supervisor who developed only one mode beyond One and Two should develop this one.

How it fails

Supervisees answer Mode Three questions with Mode One answers. Asked what the relationship is like, they describe the client. This is not evasion — it is genuinely difficult to hold a relationship as an object — and the correction is patience plus the image invitation, which bypasses the difficulty entirely.

G.5 Mode Four — The Coach’s Process

Treated in full in Session Seven. Summarized here for reference.

Covers: what the coach felt during and after the session; what she noticed in her body; what she wanted to do; what she avoided; what she has not said; her assumptions about the client; her own material that this client touches.

The twelve techniques are at §7.6: the Two-Word Check, Somatic Scan, Diary Question, Role Question, Racker Sort, Image Invitation, Uncharacteristic Test, Absent Question, Sentence Completion, Speaking as the Client, System Populate, and the Personal Resonance Inquiry.

The four causes of avoidance are at §7.4: shame, absence of contract, supervisor discomfort, and the credentialing pull.

The stance: normalize before inquiring; receive without flinching; do not rush to meaning; always return to the client.

The boundary: Mode Four is not therapy, and the distinction is purpose rather than depth. The question is always in service of this client, this Thursday. When the material becomes about the coach’s formation rather than the coach’s practice, it belongs elsewhere — and the supervisor says so.

G.6 Mode Five — The Supervisory Relationship

Attention on what is happening between supervisor and supervisee — the relationship in the room, now.

What it is for

Two distinct purposes that are often confused, and separating them matters.

Purpose one: the relationship in its own right. Contracting, trust, difficulty, rupture and repair, the effect of the power difference, whether this is working. Ordinary relational maintenance, and it needs doing.

Purpose two: the relationship as an instrument. This is where parallel process *occurs* — where the coaching dynamic reproduces itself — and it is therefore the site of the phenomenon rather than its detector. Mode Six is the detector.

Questions that open it

- How is this going — between us?
- What do you not bring here?
- What is it like to be supervised by me?
- Is anything happening between us that reminds you of anything?
- Have I got something wrong?

How our material appears

Parallel process, in its full form: the supervision reproduces the coaching, usually without either party noticing until one of them does. Everything in Session Five applies — the five mechanisms, the recognition signs, the four-step discipline, the requirement of two independent instances before naming.

Also present: the supervisee's transference to the supervisor. A coach who idealizes her supervisor, or defers to her, or competes with her, is doing something that will be recognizable to anyone who has read Session Six — the eight forms operate one level up.

How it fails

It is never entered. Mode Five requires both parties to be exposed, and the power asymmetry means the supervisee will almost never open it. If the supervisor does not, it does not happen — and a supervisory relationship that has never been discussed is one in which parallel process cannot be detected, because there is no established baseline to depart from.

The correction: a scheduled Mode Five review. Twice a year, twenty minutes, in the diary. Scheduling it removes the need for either party to decide there is a problem, which is the barrier.

G.7 Mode Six — The Supervisor's Process

Treated in full in Session Eight. Summarized here.

Covers: the supervisor's here-and-now internal experience, used as information about the whole system.

The six sources are at §8.2: her own life today; her own complexes; the supervisory relationship; parallel process from the coaching; the client as described; the wider system. **Sources one through three must be excluded before source four is entertained.**

The six shadow forms are at §8.3: grandiosity, the need to be useful, competitiveness, seduction by the interesting case, collusion, and avoidance of the normative.

The five-step internal discipline is at §8.4: maintain a second channel; run the source check; decide whether to disclose against four tests; disclose in the right grammar; log what you did not say.

The structural fact: this is the last instrument in the chain and there is nothing above it inside the session. Which is why 8.7 makes supervision of supervision a requirement rather than a recommendation.

G.8 Mode Seven — The Wider System

Attention on the context: the client's organization, the sponsor, the profession, the culture, the economic and political forces acting on everyone in the chain.

What it is for

Preventing the individualization of systemic problems. A great deal of coaching material that presents as personal difficulty is a reasonable response to an unreasonable system, and a supervision that never enters Mode Seven will help a client adapt to something that should not be adapted to.

Questions that open it

- Who is paying, and what do they want?
- What does this organization do to people like your client?
- Whose interests are served if your client changes? Whose if she does not?
- What is being coached that should be structural?
- What is this organization not able to think about?
- And what am I — the supervisor — part of here?

How our material appears

Institutional transference, described at §6.3 and illustrated in Case Nine: the client relates not to the coach but to the organization that sent her, and no amount of confidentiality assurance touches it.

Systemic isomorphism, the fifth mechanism from Session Five: the organization's structural pattern reproducing itself down the chain — through the client, the coaching, and into supervision. Case Five is this in pure form, and it is the variety that produces no feelings at all, only repeated shapes.

Professional transference, which deserves naming. Coaches have relationships to the profession itself — to the ICF, to credentialing, to the market — and those relationships enter the room. Case Twelve is a candidate whose transference to the assessment produced a marker profile that misrepresented her. This is a Mode Seven phenomenon and it is almost never discussed as one.

How it fails

Two opposite failures. **Neglect**: the system is never mentioned and every difficulty is located in an individual. **Refuge**: every difficulty is located in the system, and neither coach nor client has any agency — which is comfortable, frequently accurate, and completely useless.

The correction: hold both. *“The system is doing this to her. And what is available to her inside it?”*

G.9 Working the Modes: A Supervisor's Practical Guide

A default sequence for a 60-minute session

Not a rule — a starting shape for supervisors who find themselves stuck in Modes One and Two.

Minutes	Mode	Purpose
0–05	Contract	What does the supervisee want from this hour?
05–15	One	The picture. Ten minutes, then move.
15–25	Two or Three	What was done, or what the relationship is like.
25–40	Four	The coach's own process. The core of the hour.
40–48	Seven	What else is acting on all this?
48–55	Return	What will you do differently, and what makes that hard?
55–60	Five	How was this? Anything between us?

Mode Six runs throughout, silently, and interrupts the sequence whenever it has something. That is the point of it.

The mode audit

For six sessions, log the approximate minutes spent in each mode. Almost every supervisor who does this is surprised, and the surprise is nearly always the same: Modes One and Two account for well over half, and Modes Five and Six for under five minutes combined.

Set a target of no more than 40 percent in Modes One and Two, and at least ten minutes in Mode Four, in every session. Crude targets, and they work.

Signals for switching mode

If you notice...	Switch to...
The supervisee is describing the client for a third time	Three or Four
The supervisee is asking what she should have done	Four — “what stopped you?”
Energy has dropped in the room	Six, silently, then possibly Five
You feel something uncharacteristic	Six, then the source check
The supervisee is defending	Back to One — you moved too fast
Everything is being located in the client’s personality	Seven
Everything is being located in the organization	Four — what is available to her?
The conversation has become interesting to you	Two — whose session is this?
You are talking more than a third of the time	Silence, and Mode Six

APPENDIX G CLOSE

The one-sentence version of this appendix. Modes One and Two ask what happened. Mode Three asks what is between them. Mode Four asks what is in the coach. Modes Five and Six ask what is between and in *us*. Mode Seven asks what is around all of it.

A supervisor who can move deliberately between those five questions has the whole model, whatever she calls it.

References for Appendix G

- Bachkirova, Tatiana, Peter Jackson, and David Clutterbuck, eds. *Coaching and Mentoring Supervision: Theory and Practice*. 2nd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2020.
- Carroll, Michael. *Effective Supervision for the Helping Professions*. 2nd ed. London: Sage, 2014.
- Hawkins, Peter, and Nick Smith. *Coaching, Mentoring and Organizational Consultancy*. 2nd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2013.
- Hawkins, Peter, and Robin Shohet. *Supervision in the Helping Professions*. 5th ed. London: Open University Press, 2020.

Patterson, Gary C. *The Coaching Super-Vision Journey*. San Antonio: Organizational Leadership Coaching, LLC.

Proctor, Brigid. *Group Supervision: A Guide to Creative Practice*. 2nd ed. London: Sage, 2008.

APPENDIX H

Chronology and a Reading Path

Two hundred and fifty years in one table — and what to read next.

H.1 Annotated Chronology

The whole history covered in Sessions Two through Four, in sequence. Dates are of publication or of the event described; where a work was written long before publication, both are given.

Before Freud: 1775–1895

Date	Event	Why it matters
1775	Mesmer begins treating patients in Vienna with “animal magnetism.”	The first systematic attention to a healing effect produced by the practitioner–patient relationship itself.
1784	French Royal Commission — Franklin, Lavoisier, Guillotin — investigates Mesmer.	Concludes the effects are real but produced by imagination, not magnetism. The first controlled test of a relational treatment, and it found the relationship.
1784	Puységur describes <i>rapport</i> between magnetizer and subject.	The word, and the concept, enter the vocabulary.
1880s	Charcot at the Salpêtrière; Bernheim at Nancy.	Suggestion established as a clinical force. Bernheim’s critique anticipates the problem of the practitioner shaping what she observes.
1889	Janet describes <i>somnambulic passion</i> — patients’ intense attachment to the hypnotist.	Transference, described accurately, before it had a name.
1880–82	Breuer treats Anna O. (Bertha Pappenheim).	The “untoward event” — Breuer’s flight from the intensity of the relationship. The founding countertransference failure.
1895	Breuer and Freud, <i>Studies on Hysteria</i> .	The talking cure enters print.

Freud: 1900–1939

Date	Event	Why it matters
1905	<i>Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria</i> (“Dora”). Treatment 1900.	The first analysis of transference — and the countertransference Freud never saw. The Dora Warning.
1910	“The Future Prospects of Psycho-Analytic Therapy.”	Countertransference named for the first time — as the analyst’s own interference, to be overcome.

Date	Event	Why it matters
1912	“The Dynamics of Transference”; “Recommendations to Physicians.”	The central contradiction. The surgeon and mirror metaphors, and the telephone-receiver metaphor, five paragraphs apart.
1914	“Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through.”	What cannot be remembered is repeated. The foundation of everything in this book.
1915	“Observations on Transference-Love.”	Neither gratify nor reject — understand. Written in the shadow of Jung–Spielrein and Ferenczi–Palos.
1932	Ferenczi’s <i>Clinical Diary</i> written. Published 1988.	Professional hypocrisy; confusion of tongues; mutual analysis. Suppressed for fifty years.
1937	“Analysis Terminable and Interminable.”	Freud concedes analysts need re-analysis every five years. The ancestor of career-long supervision.

Jung and the Jungians: 1904–1998

Date	Event	Why it matters
1904–07	Word Association Experiment at the Burghölzli.	Empirical demonstration of complexes. The most under-appreciated laboratory work in the field.
1921	<i>Psychological Types</i> .	Type and the inferior function — which is where projection concentrates.
1929	“Problems of Modern Psychotherapy.”	The chemical-reaction passage: both are transformed. Forty years ahead of the field.
1946	<i>The Psychology of the Transference</i> .	The <i>Rosarium</i> sequence — ten stages of a relationship, including the <i>nigredo</i> . A relational map, not a metaphysics.
1971	Guggenbühl-Craig, <i>Power in the Helping Professions</i> .	The healer–patient archetype and the shadow of helping. Required reading for supervisors.
1974	Fordham, “Notes on the Transference.”	Illusory versus syntonic countertransference. The cleanest available distinction.
1989–98	Samuels; Schwartz-Salant; Sedgwick.	Embodied and reflective countertransference; the interactive field; the wounded healer worked through.

The Countertransference Revolution: 1946–1976

Date	Event	Why it matters
1946	Klein, “Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms.”	Projective identification — later extended interpersonally into the mechanism that makes countertransference informative.
1949	Winnicott, “Hate in the Counter-Transference.”	Objective countertransference: some reactions are <i>caused</i> by the patient and are therefore data.

Date	Event	Why it matters
1950	Heimann, “On Counter-Transference.”	The hinge of the whole field. Countertransference reconceived as the patient’s creation and the analyst’s most important instrument.
1951	Little, “Counter-Transference and the Patient’s Response to It.”	Patients perceive the practitioner’s real state. The disclosure question opens.
1955	Searles, “The Informational Value of the Supervisor’s Emotional Experiences.”	Parallel process named — as the reflection process. Includes the self-check that later authors dropped.
1958	Ekstein and Wallerstein, <i>The Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapy</i> .	The clinical rhombus. “Problem about learning” versus “learning problem.”
1962–70	Bion, <i>Learning from Experience; Attention and Interpretation</i> .	Container and contained; reverie; without memory or desire.
1968	Racker, <i>Transference and Countertransference</i> .	Concordant and complementary identification. The most practically useful distinction in the literature.
1971–77	Kohut, <i>The Analysis of the Self; The Restoration of the Self</i> .	Mirroring, idealizing, twinship. The frame most immediately recognizable in coaching.
1975	Mattinson, <i>The Reflection Process in Casework Supervision</i> .	Parallel process brought into supervision practice at the Tavistock.
1976	Sandler, “Countertransference and Role-Responsiveness.”	<i>What role am I being invited into, and have I already accepted it?</i>
1976	Doehrman, “Parallel Processes in Supervision and Psychotherapy.”	The empirical study. Found it in every pair — and found it running downward too.

Relational Turn and the Coaching Inheritance: 1982–present

Date	Event	Why it matters
1982	Ogden, <i>Projective Identification and Psychotherapeutic Technique</i> .	The concept made clinically usable.
1983	Schön, <i>The Reflective Practitioner</i> .	Reflection-in-action — the professional-education frame coaching later adopted.
1985	*Hawkins and Shohet, <i>Supervision in the Helping Professions</i> , 1st ed.*	The Seven-Eyed Model. The transmission point into the helping professions generally and later into coaching.
1988	Proctor’s three functions — normative, formative, restorative.	The organizing frame of supervision practice in the UK and beyond.
1995	Holloway, <i>Clinical Supervision: A Systems Approach</i> .	Systemic thinking applied to the supervisory relationship.

Date	Event	Why it matters
2004	Benjamin, “Beyond Doer and Done To.”	Thirdness — mutuality without symmetry. The relational settlement.
2009	Kegan and Lahey, <i>Immunity to Change</i> .	Competing commitments — the frame developed in <i>Resistance: The Gateway to Insight</i> .
2011–present	Bachkirova; de Haan; Clutterbuck; Carroll; Turner and Palmer.	Coaching supervision established as a field. The frameworks arrive without the theoretical substructure — which is the gap this book addresses.
2019–21	ICF updated Core Competencies and PCC Markers.	Marker 7.5 authorizes the coach to share intuitions and feelings with no attachment. The professional standard catches up.

THE WHOLE THING

The shape of the story, in four sentences.

The relationship was noticed before there was any theory to explain it (1784) and named badly for fifty years.

Freud found the two possible readings in 1912, chose the wrong one, and it took his profession until 1950 to reverse him.

Jung had the better account from 1929 and was largely unread by the people who needed it.

Coaching inherited the supervision frameworks in the 1990s without the two centuries underneath them — which is why a coach in 2026 can hold a credential, supervise others, and never once have heard the word “countertransference” used about her own practice.

H.2 A Reading Path

The master bibliography in Appendix C lists everything. This is a route through it, in order, for a reader who wants to go further and does not know where to start.

Stage One — If you read three things

189. *Hawkins and Shohet, *Supervision in the Helping Professions*.* The indispensable one. Read the whole thing; it is not difficult and it is the best book in the field.

190. Heimann, “On Counter-Transference” (1950). Four pages. It reversed a profession. Available in most psychoanalytic anthologies and worth the trouble of finding.

191. Sandler, “Countertransference and Role-Responsiveness” (1976). Also short, also transformative, and yields the single most useful working question in the field.

Stage Two — Going deeper on the concepts

- **Racker, Transference and Countertransference.** Dense, and the concordant/complementary chapters repay the effort. Read those chapters; you need not read the whole book.
- **Winnicott, “Hate in the Counter-Transference.”** Short, humane, and permanently useful for anyone who has felt something they thought they should not.
- **Searles (1955) and Mattinson (1975).** The parallel-process originals. Mattinson is out of print and worth hunting.
- **Guggenbühl-Craig, Power in the Helping Professions.** Short, uncomfortable, and the best thing ever written about the shadow of helping.

Stage Three — Jung, if the third session interested you

- **Stein, Jung’s Map of the Soul.** Start here, not with Jung. The clearest introduction available.
- **Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections.** For the person rather than the system.
- **von Franz, Projection and Re-Collection.** The projection material, thoroughly.
- **Sedgwick, The Wounded Healer.** Countertransference from the Jungian side, written for practitioners.
- **Jung, “The Psychology of the Transference” (CW 16).** Difficult. Attempt it only after the others, and read it for the relational stages rather than the alchemy.

Stage Four — Coaching supervision as a field

- **Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck, Coaching and Mentoring Supervision.** The standard multi-author reference.
- **de Haan, Supervision in Action.** The relational approach, from the coaching side.
- **Carroll, Effective Supervision for the Helping Professions.** Strong on the ethical and normative dimension, which most of the literature under-serves.
- **Turner and Palmer, The Heart of Coaching Supervision.** Reflection and self-care; useful counterweight.

Stage Five — Adjacent and worth it

- **Kegan and Lahey, Immunity to Change. Competing commitments — the natural companion to this material and the subject of Resistance*.*
- **Kline, Time to Think.** On what happens when a person is genuinely not interrupted. The best practical case for Marker 5.5 ever written, by someone who had never heard of it.
- **Schön, The Reflective Practitioner.** The theory of professional learning underneath everything in Appendix E.

HOW TO READ THIS FIELD

One piece of advice about all of it. Do not read this literature as a body of knowledge to be acquired. Read one short paper, then watch for the phenomenon in your own next five sessions.

Heimann in 1950 is four pages. Reading it takes twenty minutes. **Recognizing what she is describing, in yourself, takes about six weeks** — and until that happens you have not read it, you have only been through it.

APPENDIX I

Quick Reference

The operational core of the book on a small number of pages.

What follows is designed to be photocopied, kept in a folder, and looked at ten minutes before a session. It contains nothing new. Everything here is developed properly somewhere in the preceding pages, and the section reference is given so you can go back.

The same permission applies as in Appendix B: reproduce these freely for your own practice and your own supervisees; not for sale.

Card 1 — The Rule of the Threshold

THE GOVERNING RULE

In coaching, you may use what you notice. You may not go and get more.

The directional test. Toward the present and the contracted goal = coaching. Toward the past and the client's formation = therapy.

The four checks. Direction — where is this heading? Source — did it arrive, or did I fetch it? Competence — could I handle it if it opened fully? Purpose — whose interest does working it serve?

§6.2, §6.5, Appendix F.

Card 2 — The Ladder of Intervention

Rung	What you do	Status
1	Notice and hold. Say nothing. Let it inform your listening.	Always available. Does most of the work.
2	Adjust your own behavior. Slow down, stop rescuing, allow silence.	Always available. Does the rest of the work.
3	Name what is present in the room. Present tense, ordinary language, own your half, offer don't assert, serve the contracted goal.	Available. Markers 6.4 and 7.5.
4	Connect it to the wider system — does this happen elsewhere?	Conditional. Only with a clear link to the goal.
5	Interpret where it comes from.	Not coaching. Do not.

§6.4. The alignment with the marker set is at §A.9.

Card 3 — The Six Red Lines

ABSOLUTE

1. Never use clinical vocabulary with clients.
2. Never invite childhood material.
3. Never work with trauma.
4. Never build private formulations you do not test.
5. Never cultivate transference.
6. Never disclose your own reaction for your own relief.

§6.5. These are absolute. There is no client, no rapport, and no level of experience that suspends them.

Card 4 — Rung Three Language

The four elements of a well-formed naming, with a worked example.

Element	Function	Example
Own it	Removes accusation	“I notice something in me...”
Describe, don’t interpret	Keeps it checkable	“I’ve offered four things and none have landed...”
Mark uncertainty	Makes refusal possible	“This may be entirely mine...”
Hand it over	Returns authorship	“Does any of that land?”

And then: accept the first no. If nothing lands, say “fair enough” and move on. That is the marker demonstrated, not missed. *§5.6, §8.5, §A.10.*

Card 5 — Eight Transference Forms

Form	How it presents	What helps
Evaluating Authority	Careful, professional, performing; brings the impressive topic	Reduce evaluative cues; ask what they thought you wanted
Idealized Sage	Everything you say is brilliant; asks you to decide	Return authorship; make disagreement explicitly available
Withholding Parent	Expects not to be recognized; deflects acknowledgment	Specific acknowledgment, repeatedly, without pressing
The Mirror	Needs to be seen; extended narrative; little movement	Genuine seeing, then a turn toward action

Form	How it presents	What helps
The Rescuer	Presents as helpless; you feel the pull to fix	Do less; ask what they have already tried
Peer / Sibling	Warm, collegial, low challenge; “we’re so similar”	Reintroduce difference; name the comfort
Erotic	Compliments, requests to meet, sense of specialness	Restore the frame without interpreting; supervision immediately
Institutional	Relates to the sponsor through you; asks what gets reported	Name the third party in the room; information alone will not fix it

§6.3. Case illustrations at Appendix D, Cases One, Six, and Nine.

Card 6 — Ten Countertransference Patterns

If you feel...	Ask yourself...
Rescuing	Who in this person’s life is supposed to be doing this?
Boredom	Who else finds this person hard to attend to — and why?
Irritation	What am I being provoked into that others are provoked into?
Admiration	What am I not asking because I admire them?
Competitiveness	What of mine is this touching?
De-skilling	What can this client not feel that I am holding for them?
Dread	What happens in that room that I do not want to face?
Protectiveness	Who decided this person is fragile — them or me?
Specialness	What am I getting from being the one who understands?
Sleepiness	What is absent from this conversation?

§6.3. Cases Two, Three, Four, and Eight in Appendix D work four of these in full.

Card 7 — The Racker Sort

THREE SORTS

Concordant: I feel *as the client feels*. → Tells me the client’s inner experience.

Complementary: I feel *as someone in the client’s life feels toward them*. → Tells me the client’s impact on others.

Mine: I feel as I usually feel, or as my own history disposes me to feel. → Tells me about me. Take it to supervision.

The test: if the feeling matches what the client describes, concordant. If it matches what the client says *others* do to them, complementary. If it matches my own list from Inventory 3, suspect mine — and check the other two anyway.

§4.4, Exercise 4.2, Case Three.

Card 8 — The Source Check (Supervisors)

When you notice something in yourself while supervising, run these **in order**. One to three must be excluded before four is entertained.

192. My own day. Is this present with other supervisees today?

193. My own complexes. Is this on my list? Does it recur with similar material?

194. This supervisory relationship. Is it consistent across the different cases they bring?

195. Parallel process. Is it specific to *this case* — arriving with it and lifting when it lifts?

196. The client, directly. Did it arise during description rather than interaction?

197. The wider system. Is it shared across several supervisees?

§8.2. Then: two independent instances before naming, and the four disclosure tests at §8.4.

Card 9 — The Twelve Mode Four Techniques

#	Technique	The move
1	Two-Word Check	“Two words for how you felt in that session.”
2	Somatic Scan	“Where is she in your body?”
3	Diary Question	“What do you feel when you see her name in the diary?”
4	Role Question	“What role are you being invited into?”
5	Racker Sort	“Is that hers, or is it theirs about her?”
6	Image Invitation	“Give me an image for the two of you.”
7	Uncharacteristic Test	“Is that like you — generally, and with her?”
8	Absent Question	“What have you not asked her?”
9	Sentence Completion	“With her, I always...”
10	Speaking as the Client	“Say a sentence as her.”
11	System Populate	“Who else is in the room when you two meet?”

#	Technique	The move
12	Personal Resonance	“Does this touch anything of yours?” — three rules apply.

§7.6. *Always return to the client before the session ends.*

Card 10 — Before You Name Parallel Process

FOUR STEPS

- 1. Check yourself first.** Your day, your themes, this relationship. Searles’s own discipline, routinely dropped.
- 2. Wait for two independent instances.** One is a hunch. Two is a hypothesis.
- 3. Name it as yours, with a question attached.** Never “you’re doing to me what she does to you.”
- 4. Work the difference, not the insight.** Recognition is the beginning. “What will you do on Thursday, and what makes it hard?” is the work.

§5.6. *Inventory 5 is the long form of this card.*

Card 11 — Referral

Indicators: material moves consistently toward the past; distress exceeds what the session can hold; the same wound recurs across sessions regardless of topic; you would need to go and get more; you are working outside what you were trained for.

The five elements of a referral made well:

- 198.** Name the pattern without shame — “this keeps arriving, and I don’t think you need to apologize for it.”
- 199.** State your limits honestly — “this isn’t what I’m trained for.”
- 200.** Offer a specific route — names, not categories.
- 201.** Continue the coaching where it is legitimate — referral is addition, not transfer.
- 202.** Say explicitly that you are not leaving — “I’m still here.”

§6.7. *Worked in full at Appendix D, Case Eleven.*

Card 12 — The Five Questions That Do Most of the Work

THE FIVE

- 1.** Is this like me — generally, and here, now? (*The Uncharacteristic Test*)

2. What role am I being invited into, and have I already accepted it? (*Sandler*)
3. Is this hers, or is it theirs about her? (*Racker*)
4. What would disconfirm this? (*The whole discipline, in six words*)
5. Who is this disclosure for? (*The gate before every naming*)

If you carry nothing else out of this book, carry these.

Concept Index

Principal treatments only. Passing mentions are not indexed.

Absent question — §7.6 (technique 8); §G.4

ACC / PCC / MCC progression — §A.3

Airtime — Marker 7.8, §A.10; Exercise A.2

Alchemical sequence (Rosarium) — §3.7; Appendix H

Anna O. / Breuer — §2.2; Exercise 2.1; Appendix H

Archetype — §3.3; Appendix C

Assessment, transference to — Appendix D, Case Twelve; §A.12

Bion — container / reverie — §4.4; Exercise 4.4; Case Eight

Boredom — §6.3; Card 6; Case Three

Cautions (per session) — §1.9, 2.8, 3.9, 4.8, 5.8, 6.9, 7.8, 8.9

Collusion — §8.3; §A.12

Competing commitments — §6.8; Exercise 6.5; Appendix C

Complementary identification — §4.4; Card 7; Case Three, Case Nine

Complex — §3.2; Inventory 3

Concordant identification — §4.4; Card 7

Contracting (coaching) — §6.6; Markers 3.1–3.4 at §A.6

Contracting (supervision) — §7.5; §E.3

Countertransference — definition and history — §1.4; §2.3; §4.3–4.4

Countertransference — ten patterns — §6.3; Card 6

De-skilling — §6.3; Card 6; Case Eight

Disclosure discipline — §5.6; §8.4; Cards 4 and 10

Doehrman study; downward parallel process — §5.4; Case Ten; Appendix H

Dora; the Dora Warning — §2.3; Exercise 2.3

Enactment — §4.6; Appendix C

Erotic transference — §6.3; Case Six

Ethics — §8.8; §A.4

Evidence base (honest assessment) — §5.5; Appendix F

Ferenczi — §4.2; Appendix H

Fordham — illusory / syntonic — §3.8; §8.2

Freud — the central contradiction — §2.4

Grandiosity (supervisor) — §8.3; Case Ten

Group supervision — §5.7; §8.6; Case Seven

Heimann 1950 — §4.3; Appendix H

Idealizing transference — §4.5; §6.3; Case One

Individuation — §3.4; Appendix C

Institutional transference — §6.3; §G.8; Case Nine

Instrument problem — §1.6

Isomorphism, systemic — §5.5; §G.8; Case Five

Jung — system — Session Three throughout

Klein — projective identification — §4.3

Kohut — selfobject transferences — §4.5

Ladder of intervention — §6.4; Card 2; §A.9

Mentor coaching vs supervision — §7.4; §E.2; Appendix F

Mode Four (Eye Four) — Session Seven; §G.5

Mode Six (Eye Six) — Session Eight; §G.7

Modes One, Two, Three, Five, Seven — §7.2; §G.2–G.8

Nigredo — §3.7; Exercise 3.4

Parallel process — Session Five throughout; Cards 8 and 10

Persona / shadow / Self — §3.4

PCC Marker Flight Plan Model — §A.14

Projection; prospective function — §3.5–3.6; Exercise 3.3

Racker sort — §4.4; Card 7

Red lines — §6.5; Card 3

Referral — §6.7; Card 11; Case Eleven

Reluctance question — Exercise 1.3; Case Four

Rescuing — §6.3; Card 6; Case Two

Role responsiveness (Sandler) — §4.4; Exercise 4.1; Card 12

Rule of the Threshold — Preface; §6.2; Card 1

Sculpt Inquiry — §5.7; Exercise 5.4; Case Seven

Searles — §5.2; Appendix H

Seven-Eyed Model — §7.2; Appendix G

Special client — §6.3; Case Four

Supervision of supervision — §8.7; Appendix F

Team and systemic coaching — §5.7; Appendix F

Thereapist / thereness — §3.5; §6; §A.8

Transference — definition and history — §1.4; §2.3; §3.5

Transference — eight forms — §6.3; Card 5

Transmission chain (five steps) — §1.5; Sessions Seven and Eight

Uncharacteristic Test — §1.6; Exercise 1.2; Card 12

Winnicott — objective countertransference — §4.3

Word Association Experiment — §3.2; Appendix H

Wounded healer; Guggenbühl-Craig — §3.8; §8.3

The Unconscious at Work — Gary C. Patterson, D.D., M.Div., Th.M., MCC. Organizational Leadership Coaching, LLC, and the Organizational Leadership Coaching Institute. San Antonio, Texas.

APPENDIX J

The Document Set

Model language for contracting, disclosure, referral, and the supervision agreement.

WHY THIS APPENDIX EXISTS

Everything in the eight sessions depends on permissions that must exist **before** they are needed. A coach cannot name what is happening in the room at minute thirty if the client was never told, at minute one of session one, that this was part of the work. A supervisor cannot do Mode Four inquiry with a coach who believes supervision is quality inspection.

This appendix supplies the language. Every item is a model, not a form. Adapt the wording to your own voice — but do not omit the function, because each clause is here to make one specific thing possible later.

A note on legal status before anything else. **None of this is legal advice, and none of it is a substitute for a professional services agreement drafted for your jurisdiction.**

These are relational and ethical clauses, intended to sit alongside — not replace — the commercial terms of your engagement. Where a clause has contractual consequences, have it reviewed by someone qualified to review it.

J.1 Coaching Agreement: The Relational Clauses

Five clauses belong in a coaching agreement if the material in this book is to be usable. Each is given in model form, followed by a note on what it makes possible.

Clause 1 — The Relationship as Working Material

MODEL LANGUAGE

Coaching works partly through the relationship between us. From time to time I may say something about what I notice happening between us in a session — for example, that a topic seems to be circling, or that I notice myself hesitating, or that the energy in a conversation has shifted. I do this because it is often useful information about the situation you are working on. You are free to say that an observation does not fit. “That isn’t it” is a complete answer and I will take it at face value.

What it makes possible: Rung Three of the ladder. Without this clause, a coach who names a here-and-now dynamic in session eight is doing something the client did not agree to and has no framework for receiving. With it, the intervention is expected and pre-authorized.

Note the last sentence. It is the most important one. It hands the client an exit that costs them nothing, which is what distinguishes an offer from an interpretation. A clause that

establishes the coach's right to comment without establishing the client's right to decline has made things worse rather than better.

Clause 2 — Scope of Practice

MODEL LANGUAGE

Coaching is not therapy, counselling, or psychological treatment, and I am not acting as your therapist. Coaching works forward from where you are toward goals you set. It does not treat psychological conditions and it is not designed to work with trauma or with distress that has its roots in your personal history.

If material of that kind comes up — and in serious work it sometimes does — I will say so plainly rather than quietly steering around it, and we will talk about whether additional or different support would serve you better. That conversation is a normal part of professional practice and not a judgment about you or a sign that coaching has failed.

What it makes possible: referral without shame. The second paragraph does the real work. It pre-frames the referral conversation months before it might happen, and it names in advance the meaning the client would otherwise be likely to make of it — that they have been found to be too damaged for coaching. Clients who have read this sentence in month one receive a referral in month seven very differently.

Clause 3 — Supervision

MODEL LANGUAGE

Like all professional coaches working to recognized standards, I take my work to supervision. Supervision is a regular, confidential conversation with an experienced colleague about how I am practicing. Its purpose is to keep my work sound and to keep me useful to you.

In supervision I discuss my own practice, not your private business. I do not use your name or the name of your organization, and I share only what is necessary to examine my own work. My supervisor is bound by the same confidentiality that I am.

What it makes possible: the ethical position argued in section 8.8. The client is not in the room during supervision and cannot consent to what happens there; the least a profession can do is tell them it happens, what it is for, and what protects them.

A practical caution. Do not include this clause unless it is true. A coach who describes supervision in a client agreement and does not have contracted supervision has made a misrepresentation, and in a dispute it would be treated as one.

Clause 4 — Confidentiality and Its Limits

MODEL LANGUAGE

What you say in coaching is confidential. There are four situations in which I would need to break that, and I would tell you I was doing it wherever it was safe and possible to do so: where I believe there is a serious risk of harm to you or to another person; where I am required to disclose by law or court order; where I become aware of activity that I am legally obliged to report; and, in a limited and anonymized form, in my own professional supervision as described above.

Where this coaching is paid for by your organization, I will report only on the matters we have agreed together — typically attendance, whether the engagement is on track, and the goals you have chosen to share. I will not report on the content of our conversations.

What it makes possible: the honest handling of institutional transference (Session Six). The second paragraph is what allows a coach to say, later and truthfully, “I understand you’re wondering what goes back to your director. Here is exactly what goes back — and here is what does not.” A client who does not know the answer to that question will supply their own, and their answer will shape everything they choose to bring.

Clause 5 — Review and Ending

MODEL LANGUAGE

We will review how the coaching is going at [three sessions / the midpoint], and either of us may raise the question earlier. That review includes how the working relationship itself feels to you — whether you are getting what you need, and whether there is anything about how I work that is not serving you.

What it makes possible: a scheduled occasion for the client to name a transference dynamic from their side without having to invent an occasion. Idealizing and evaluative transferences in particular are almost never volunteered spontaneously; they surface, if at all, when a structured review makes it legitimate to speak about the relationship rather than the topic.

J.2 The Supervision Agreement

A supervision agreement carries a heavier load than a coaching agreement, because it must authorize the supervisee’s own inner experience as legitimate content. Without that authorization Mode Four is unavailable, and the supervision will run permanently in Modes One and Two — which is exactly what most coaching supervision does.

The following is a complete model agreement. Sections marked † are the ones that make this book’s material usable; the rest is ordinary good practice included so the document is whole.

Model Supervision Agreement

SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

1. Purpose. Supervision exists to support the quality of your coaching practice, your development as a practitioner, and your wellbeing in the work. It serves three functions, and we

will attend to all three: the quality of the work (normative), your growth as a coach (formative), and your sustainability in a demanding profession (restorative).

2. Frequency and form. We will meet for [90] minutes, [monthly], [by video / in person]. Sessions are protected time; cancellation with less than [48] hours' notice is chargeable except in emergency.

† **3. What is discussable.** The subject of supervision is your practice, and that includes your own experience of the work. You are invited to bring not only what your clients said and what you did, but what you felt, noticed, avoided, disliked, enjoyed, and did not understand. Reactions to clients — including irritation, boredom, attraction, dread, protectiveness, and admiration — are normal features of relational work and are among the most useful material we can examine. They are not evidence of a problem with you.

† **4. The limit on that.** We examine your reactions in order to serve your clients and your practice. Where something in your own history is clearly driving a pattern, I will name that I think so, and we will consider together whether it belongs in your own personal work rather than here. Supervision is not therapy and I am not your therapist. The boundary is purpose, not subject matter: we may touch personal material, but always in service of the work, and always returning to the client.

5. Confidentiality. What you bring is confidential to this relationship, with four exceptions: serious risk of harm; legal requirement; my own supervision of supervision, in anonymized form; and matters of professional misconduct that I am ethically obliged to address. If I am ever in a position where I believe I must act on the last of these, I will tell you before I do it.

† **6. My own process.** I will sometimes tell you what I notice in myself while we are working — a feeling, a reluctance, a shift in the room. I do this because it is frequently information about your client's system rather than about you or me. It is offered as a hypothesis and never as a finding. If it does not fit, say so, and I will let it go without pressing.

† **7. Challenge in both directions.** If you think I have got something wrong, or that something between us is not working, I want to hear it. I am asking for this explicitly because the power in this relationship is not equal and unspoken things tend to stay unspoken. I will not be gracious about a challenge and then quietly hold it against you.

8. Records. I keep brief notes of our sessions for my own practice review. They do not contain client-identifying information. You are entitled to see them.

9. My own supervision. I have contracted supervision of my supervision practice with [name / a qualified supervisor]. This is a requirement of sound practice, not an optional extra.

10. Ending and review. We will review this arrangement every [six] months, including whether I am the right supervisor for you at this stage. Either of us may end the arrangement with [one month's] notice, and I would want a final session rather than an ending by email.

On clause 3. Read the last sentence again: *they are not evidence of a problem with you.* Section 7.4 identified shame as the primary cause of Mode Four avoidance. This sentence is the countermeasure, and it must appear in writing, at the start, before there is anything to be ashamed of. A supervisee who is told at month nine that irritation is normal has already spent nine months concealing it.

On clause 7. Most supervision agreements contain an invitation to challenge. Almost none contain the second sentence, and the second sentence is the one that gets believed. Supervisees know perfectly well that an invitation can be a trap; naming the trap is what disarms it.

On the assessment problem. If your supervision is also assessment — if you write reports, sign off hours, or make credentialing recommendations about this person — add a clause saying so explicitly, and accept the consequence described in section 7.4: **full Mode Four work is not available in that relationship.** The honest response is to say so and to recommend that the supervisee have a separate, non-assessing supervisory relationship in which it is. Pretending otherwise produces supervisees who perform disclosure while disclosing nothing.

J.3 Disclosure Grammar: Sentence Stems

The four rules from Session Five — own it, mark the uncertainty, keep it observable, end with a question — are easier to state than to produce under pressure. What follows is a set of stems that satisfy all four automatically. Practitioners report that having three or four memorized removes most of the difficulty.

For the coach, in the coaching room (Rung Three)

Situation	Stem
A pattern in the conversation	I want to check something with you. I notice we've come back to — and then away from — [topic] three times now. I don't know what that means. Do you?
A shift in the room	Something just changed in the last minute and I can't name it. Did you notice it too?

Situation	Stem
Your own reaction, owned	I notice I've been [holding back / working unusually hard / choosing my words carefully] for the last ten minutes. That's not typical for me. I'm curious whether it's telling us something about the situation, or whether it's just me.
Something absent	We've talked about [X] for forty minutes and [Y] hasn't come up once. That may mean nothing at all. Does it mean anything?
A repeated dynamic	Can I offer an observation you're free to reject? Each time we get close to [X], the conversation moves to [Y]. I may be reading that wrongly.
Checking a possible enactment	I want to ask whether I'm doing something here that's familiar to you from elsewhere. Am I being [the one who has the answers / too easy on you / too quick]?

Every one of these can be answered with “no, I don't think so” at no cost to the client. That is the design requirement. If a stem cannot comfortably receive a flat denial, it is an interpretation wearing a question mark.

For the supervisor, in Mode Six

Situation	Stem
Naming your own state	I want to say something about me rather than about the client. I notice [X] in myself right now. I don't know yet whether it's mine or the case's.
A suspected parallel	Something is happening between us that I think might be worth looking at. We've [described the pattern]. Does that resemble anything in the coaching?
The uncharacteristic test on yourself	I've been unusually [gentle / directive / hesitant] with you in the last half hour, and that isn't how I usually am with you. I'd like to understand it.
Offering after a check	I've run this past myself and I don't think it's my morning and I don't think it's you and me generally. Which leaves the case. Can I try something?
Withdrawing cleanly	That doesn't land — fine. Let's leave it. Where were we?

The last row is the one supervisors most need and least practice. **Withdrawing an observation without a trace of injury is a technical skill.** A supervisor who withdraws while visibly disappointed has not withdrawn; she has moved the pressure into the nonverbal channel where the supervisee cannot answer it.

Six sentences to strike from your practice

Do not say	Why it fails
“I think this is parallel process.”	Asserts a mechanism as fact, in vocabulary that ends the inquiry rather than opening it.

Do not say	Why it fails
“You’re projecting onto me what your client projects onto you.”	Two unverifiable claims stacked, delivered as diagnosis, with the supervisee positioned as the object of study.
“I’m feeling what your client feels.”	Claims direct access to a third party’s inner life. You cannot know this.
“This sounds like it’s about your father.”	In coaching: outside scope entirely. In supervision: an interpretation the supervisee did not contract for.
“Does that resonate?” (<i>after a long formulation</i>)	Invites compliance. Supervisees agree with senior people. Ask before the formulation, not after.
“I could be wrong, but I’m fairly sure...”	A hedge cancelled by its own second half. Either mark the uncertainty or do not.

J.4 The Referral Conversation

Session Six gave the five-step structure. Here is the language, and then the follow-up correspondence.

REFERRAL SCRIPT

Step 1 — Name it as yours, not theirs.

“I want to raise something about the shape of our work rather than about you. I think we’ve arrived at the edge of what coaching can properly do here.”

Step 2 — Be specific about what you have observed.

“What I notice is that the thing that keeps stopping progress isn’t about strategy or skill. Every route we take arrives at [the specific pattern], and that has roots that go further back than this job. That is real, and it deserves proper attention — and it’s attention of a kind I’m not qualified to give.”

Step 3 — Refer back to the agreement.

“When we started, I said that if material came up that belonged somewhere else, I’d say so rather than steer around it. This is me doing that.”

Step 4 — Say plainly what this is not.

“This isn’t me saying there’s something wrong with you, and it isn’t me ending our work because it’s difficult. Coaching hasn’t failed. It’s reached its proper limit, which is a different thing.”

Step 5 — Offer the practical next step and the choice about coaching.

“I can give you two or three names of people who work with exactly this, or your organization’s programme may cover it. And separately: I’d be glad to keep working with you on [the contracted goal] alongside that, or to pause and pick up later. That’s entirely your call.”

On step 5. Referral does not automatically mean ending the coaching, and coaches frequently conflate the two. Concurrent coaching and therapy is common, appropriate, and often more useful than either alone, provided the boundary between them is clear and the client is not being asked to carry a hidden coordination burden.

A note to a referral colleague**MODEL LETTER**

Dear [name],

I am a coach and I have a client who I think would be better served by therapeutic work than by anything I can properly offer. With their permission I am giving them your details.

I have not made a formulation and would not be qualified to. What I can tell you factually is that we have been working on [contracted business goal] for [duration], and that the work has repeatedly reached a point that appears to have personal history behind it rather than a skills or strategy gap.

I have made clear to them that a referral is not a judgment about them and does not require them to stop coaching. If they choose to continue with me alongside your work, I would welcome whatever boundary you would want between us, and I will not ask you for information about your work with them.

With thanks,

[name]

Send this only with the client’s explicit permission, and show it to them first. The paragraph that matters is the second: a coach who supplies a therapist with a psychological formulation has done the client a disservice and stepped outside her competence in writing.

J.5 The Session Record

A record designed for this material differs from an ordinary coaching note in one respect: it separates what was observed from what was inferred, and it keeps a column for what the coach noticed in herself. Six fields, no more than ten minutes.

Field	What goes in it
Contracted focus	What the client said they wanted from this session, in their words.
Observable	What actually happened. What was said, what changed, what was agreed. No interpretation.

Field	What goes in it
In me	What I noticed in myself: feeling, body, impulse, what I wanted to do and did not. One line is enough.
Uncharacteristic?	Was anything in the previous field unusual for me? Yes / no. If yes, one line on how.
Held as hypothesis	Any working idea about the client's system — written explicitly as a question, never as a finding.
For supervision	Anything I would want a second pair of eyes on, including anything I am reluctant to raise.

Three disciplines govern this record.

203. Never write a clinical term in a client record. Not “transference,” not “narcissistic,” not “defended.” Records are discoverable, clients may request them, and a coach’s speculative diagnosis in writing is indefensible. Write behavior: *“asked three times whether I was satisfied with her progress.”*

204. Keep the “in me” field separate from the client record entirely. Best practice is two documents: a client file containing contracted focus, observable events, and agreed actions; and a private practice journal containing everything else. The second is about you and belongs to you.

205. Review the “uncharacteristic” field monthly, across all clients. This is where the convergence discipline from Session One actually operates. A single unusual reaction is noise. The same unusual reaction with four clients in a month is a finding about you — and it belongs in your next supervision.

J.6 A One-Page Ethical Checklist

Before acting on anything you have noticed — in either chair — six questions. They take under a minute and they prevent most of the harm this material is capable of doing.

#	Question	If the answer is wrong
1	Whose benefit is this for — theirs or mine?	If mine: be silent, and take it to supervision.
2	Am I inside what I was contracted to do?	If no: return to the contract, or renegotiate it openly.
3	Am I claiming to know something I cannot know?	If yes: convert it to a question before you speak.
4	Can this person decline what I am about to offer, at no cost?	If no: change the wording until they can.
5	Is this within my competence and my qualification?	If no: stop, and consider referral.

#	Question	If the answer is wrong
6	Would I be comfortable if this person read my notes on it?	If no: your notes are the problem — fix them today.

THE ONE THAT MATTERS

The single test, if you can only remember one.

Question one. Almost every serious misuse of this material — the untested formulation delivered as insight, the disclosure that relieves the practitioner, the interpretation that demonstrates perceptiveness, the fascinating excursion that never returns to the client — fails at question one and nowhere else.

Whose benefit is this for?

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