

Session 7: Incremental Progress

Most of us have had the experience of seeing a child after what seemed like a short time and being astonished at how much they had grown. When we were children, we didn't really notice that we had gotten an inch taller or gained the pounds that filled out our child's body. We grew a fraction of an inch a month, not enough to seem important, but to someone who was not there day after day, the difference was significant.

Most of the significant changes in our lives creep upon us, we prepare a CV and realise we have twenty years' experience at something. We come to an anniversary of some sort and are amazed at the years that have passed. We perfect our skills in some way and what was once a struggle is now easy.

We become aware of the cumulative effects of our efforts when we complete a project, but all too often we do not notice or acknowledge our incremental progress. We feel we are moving forward when a task is done, before that we just plodding along.

As a coach, you will want to call the client's attention to their incremental steps, and offer structures that enable the client to detect and celebrate this progress. Books get written one sentence at a time. Fortunes get built one pound at a time; scientific "breakthroughs" are often the result of painstaking daily or hourly observations.

When it is incremental the choice a person is making may be less obvious to them. As an example of how increments add up, studies show that the average American spends 40% of his/her free time watching television. Over an average lifetime, that amounts to ten years. One decade. Was this a choice consciously made?

As you are refining your skills as a coach, and as you are taking steps to change and enhance your life, we will be asking you to notice your incremental progress. There are many ways to track your incremental progress. You can track habits on a chart or graph. You can review in your mind at the end of each day and acknowledge what you have done. You can go back and compare where you are now with where you were a month ago.

Coaching Tips

Ask your clients how they want to chart their incremental progress and celebrate the movement they are making with coaching in their lives?

Session 7: Incremental Progress / Assignment

Please ensure that you have read Page 52 and have listened to the MP3 recording before completing the following exercise:

One Step at a Time

This is a walking exercise in which you focus on the gentle way in which your foot meets the ground and rises again. With each step you take you are grounding your new ideas about how and what you want to change in your life; that is, you are making your ideas real.

As you move forwards each step will be a step towards making the changes you want to make.

1) Take the First Step

Imagine that you are about to take the first step towards change. Now symbolically take that first step.

2) Walk with Awareness

Bring your total focus to each step that you take. Feel the way that your foot meets the floor, how it completes a step and then rises again. Become totally aware of the way you are walking.

3) Let thoughts go

As you are walking let all other thoughts go. Keep coming back to focussing on your steps.

4) Get Grounded.

Become aware of the earth beneath your feet. The earth supports you every step of the way.

Allow this knowledge to give you the confidence to move forwards in your life. Please reflect on and write about your experience. (250 – 500 words)

Please note:

The word counts are intended as a guideline to give you an indication of how much to write.

Where you have relied on additional references please list these at the end of your work. For example:

Coaching with NLP, Joseph O'Connor and Andreas Lages (2004), Chapter 1: What is Coaching? Pages 1 – 13