

ICF CONVERGE

OCTOBER 23-25, 2025 • SAN DIEGO



Coaching with Metaphors

**The Science of Language, Listening & Embodied Experience in
Coaching**

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**what brought
you here?**



What we are covering



- Thinkers | Thought Partners
- Play – Break out
- Disrupt Your Listening
- Metaphors
 - Conceptual
 - Expanded
- The Mind at Work
- Novel versus Conventional
- Coaching Demonstration
- Psychological Safety
- Cognitive Load
- Practice – Break out
- Q&A



Thinker | Thought Partner



- Coaches = Thought Partners
- Clients = Thinkers

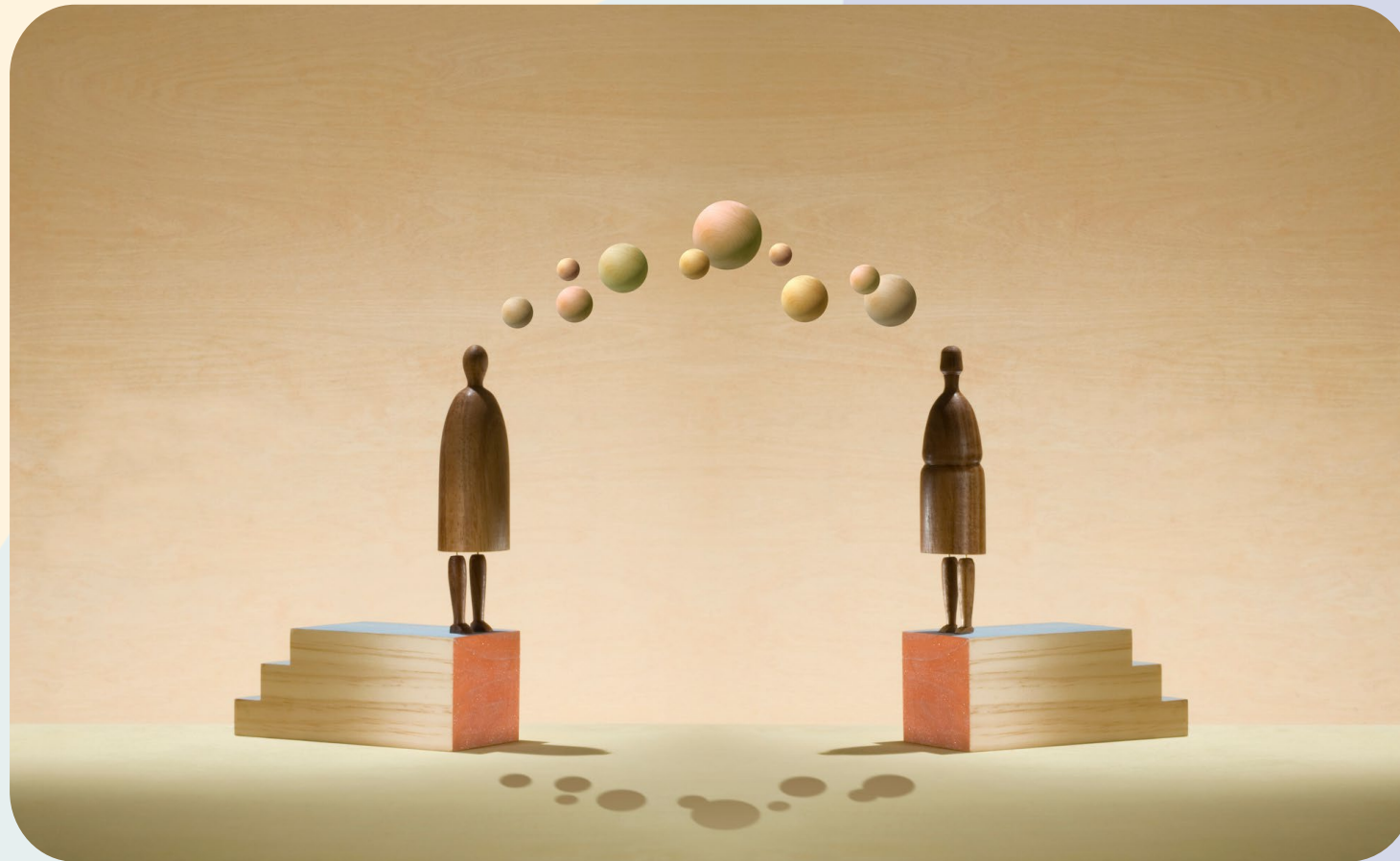


What does it mean to be a 'thought partner?'

What does it mean to truly listen to the thinker?

What is required?

Disrupt Your Listening





Let's Play

- Break into groups of 3 to 5
- Again, find a few people you don't know well.
- Two people start.
- You can only speak in questions.
- If someone doesn't ask a question, then next person steps in.
- If everyone is brilliant at asking questions, then give space to another person after about a minute.



What did you Notice?



We all have patterns of how we show up and listen in our coaching relationships. Our curiosity and listening can become habituated.

We may be listening for:

- Problems / Obstacles
- Challenges / Struggles
- How to Solve/Solutions
- Assumed Outcomes
- Intentions/Actions
- Situations/Circumstances

Listening Differently





Now that we know that just like we see what we look for, we hear for what we are listening for.

How does this impact Listening?

Our Focus Matters



Here are a few of the metaphors that I've heard in my work:

- I feel like I am on a hamster wheel,
- I need to lean into my vision,
- There are so many hurdles I'm jumping
- My confidence has taken a hit...
- My plate is so full.
- I'm frozen
- I am on the fence
- I am at a fork in the road
- I've been grinding and pushing
- I really want some clarity on the next step.



Metaphors I Have Heard





Hidden In Plain Sight





Metaphors | Idea Containers

Metaphors are idea containers, making the abstract accessible. We use approximately 17-49 metaphors per 1,000 words. As Coaches, we are listening for the “OWNED” Metaphors.



Thinking Is Moving: Ideas are Locations we move thru; Communicating is Leading; Understanding is Following.

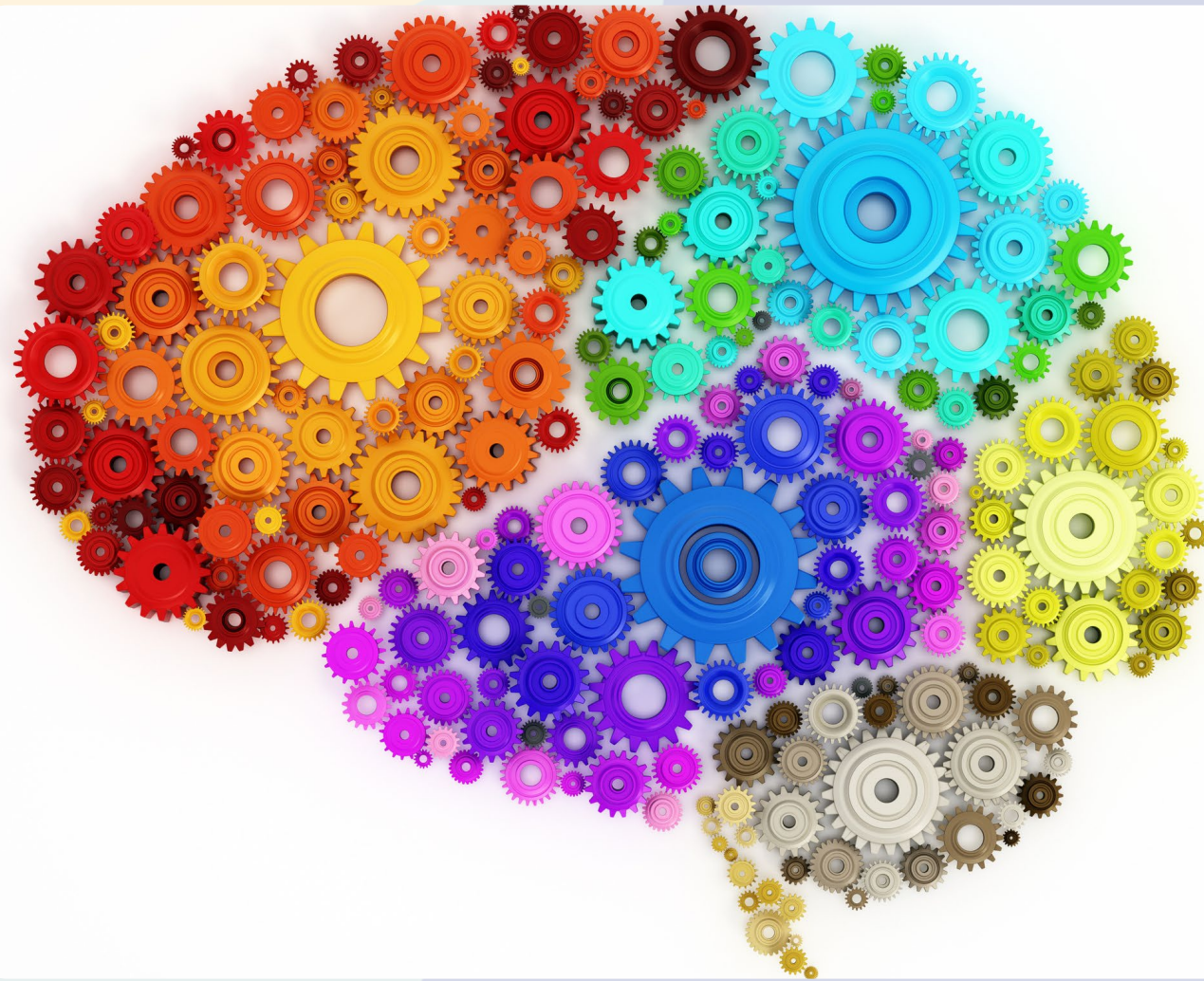
Thinking is Seeing: Ideas are Things Seen; Communication Is Showing.

Thinking Is Object Manipulation: Ideas Are Objects; Communication Is Sending; Understanding is Grasping.

Thinking Is Eating: Ideas Are Food; Communication is Feeding; Understanding is Digesting.

The Four Conceptual Metaphors

The Neuroscience Of Metaphors





- Action-Based
- Visual-Based
- Object-Based
- Food/Digestion-Based
- Sensation-Based
- Emotion-Based
- Identity/Object-Based
- Space/Location-Based

The NeuroScience

My Expanded Conceptual Metaphors



The Mind at Work

When people use language to communicate thoughts, ideas, beliefs, values, problems or insights, they aren't using it accidentally. The words may be chosen unconsciously, but they tell us a lot about what it is that the thinker is experiencing.





Metaphors are not always obvious. We may need to amplify our toolbox to hear the metaphors our thinkers share with us.

Visual and Somatic Metaphors



Novel versus Conventional Metaphors

When we use our metaphors we run the risk of confusing the thinker.



Coaching Demonstration





What did you Notice?



Practice



- Practice together – Groups of 3
- 1 coach
- 1 thinker
- 1 observer
 - Pay attention to the metaphors that the thinker brings to the conversation.
 - Notice how the coach leverages them.





Cognitive Load Theory

Using the Thinker's metaphors can reduce cognitive load by leveraging familiar mental frameworks, making it easier to communicate complex emotions, experiences, and concepts.





Self-regulate and Co-regulate



When we regulate ourselves, we create the conditions for the Thinker to regulate too. Agreement + Presence keep both brains clear and engaged.





Credition and Blindspotting

Credition = the way the brain updates beliefs.

Blind spots = the unknowns.

Blindspotting = the discipline of looking for your blind spots.

To do your own blindspotting as a coach, you need to build structures of reflection that interrupt your default patterns.



Client-Led Conversations





Psychological Safety



Psychological Safety is about openness, allowing for multiple ideas, and aligning coaching questions and conversations with thinker-led goals.

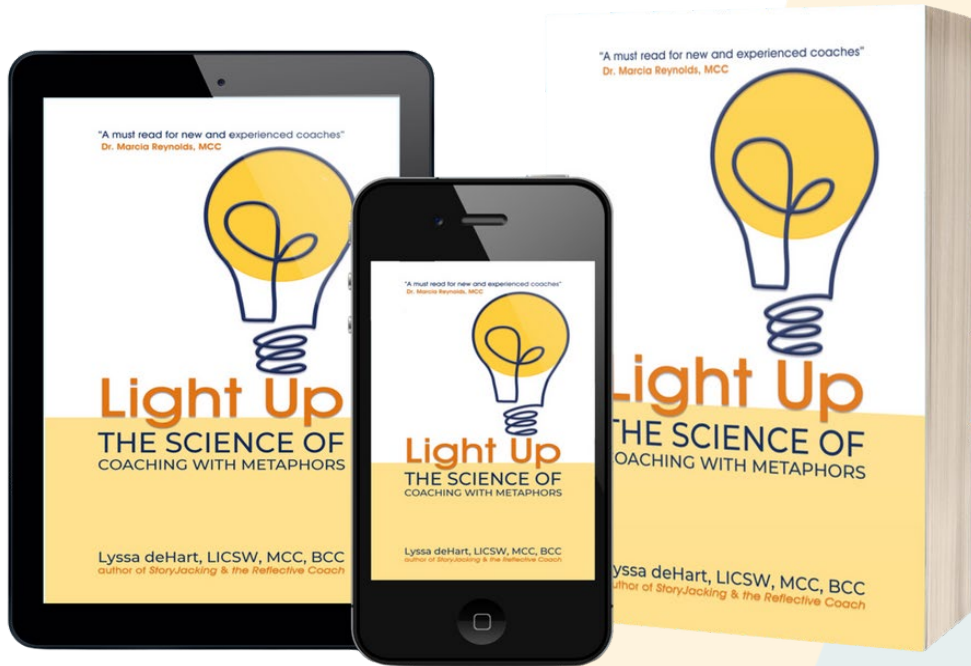




Transformation, Partnership, Motivation, and Sticky Outcomes

Meeting our thinkers where they are, listening to them, building trusting relationships, so that they can laugh with you, is how we build partnership with others.





Questions?



Thank You



Lyssa deHart



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