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# Creativity in Coaching

## Tools, tips & techniques

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# The Un-examined Script

## Four creative methods of discovery that accelerate transformational outcomes

By Pam Boney, MA, PCC, MTC

Most people have at least two underlying stories that drive the way they live their lives. There is the surface story that is often derived from avoidance of early fears that helped them survive their first social system, the family of origin. And then there is the deeper story underneath that contains the unfolding script of the true self that wants to reveal itself and experience growth.

If the craft of coaching is to help others claim and develop that true self through the simple act of being witnessed and supported by someone objective and self-aware, then we must know our own true stories as intimately as possible. Only then can we be participants in this creative form of transformational change that springs from our deepest yearnings.

The challenge is to build creative methods of discovery that can accelerate self-awareness and self-knowledge in ourselves and others, exponentially. This spontaneous flow of energetic growth is possible when we are able to consistently provide a container of psychological safety that increasingly frees us from unconscious fears.

Having coached many hundreds of people over the last 14 years, I've learned that the first month of discovery can alter the entire course and outcome of coaching by accelerating openness to change. My goal during the setup phase is to help my clients discover their surface scripts that reveal unconscious secrets that lie just under the surface waiting to be discovered. These stories contain the juice for rapid awareness and change. What follows are four creative tools I've devised to unleash this powerful process.

### 1. The Persona Map Brainstorm

The first of two methods I designed are conducted in a face-to-face Discovery Day with clients at the outset of the engagement. In lieu of interviews, which focus the client outward, I elect to use this time to go inward instead. These first two tools focus energy on inside-out awareness designed to prepare their mindset for how to process feedback from the outside later.

The Persona Map Brainstorm helps clients gain inner clarity about the multitudes of sub-personalities that guide the variety of behaviors they use regularly and habitually.

The exercise is a free-association brainstorming designed to surface a wide variety of roles and personas they have cultivated over time. As they unfold, I help organize these on a map for whole-person development in order to gauge how much the client has developed character strengths in the four primary drivers of identity, namely: Head, Heart, Gut and Spirit.

Sometimes one will have been ignored and left undeveloped in practice. More importantly, I want to find the most fearful parts in the psyche. And ultimately, THE most fearful part that is the "lord of them all" and controls much of the psyche. If we can locate this one, including which of the four dimensions of wholeness is limited by it, then I know we have opportunities to unleash new energetic power in their evolution toward wholeness and inner balance.

### Creative Takeaway:

As Walt Whitman would say "we contain multitudes…" but few of us are aware of the sub-personalities lurking in our psyche and battling it out inside of us, wasting precious energy that could be harnessed into creative output if only we were more aware.

Understanding how the psyche works is a powerful tool for helping us understand the nature of habitual behavior and how it shapes our destiny.

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## 2. The Lifeline Story

Another method I employ in the Discovery Day is to facilitate a process for clients to examine their life story on a timeline trajectory. Here I help them map their life-defining influencers and life-defining moments in each decade of life.

Being a witness to the whole story of someone's life is a gift to both the observer and the storyteller. How often does one get to be seen in such a way? It helps me fall in love with each client's originality and unfolding tale. For them, it creates a bond of trust that brings about healing of old hurts that operate from fear instead of inner strength.

My experience with this exercise is that everyone has a compelling story that explains *why they are who they are* today. Honoring them with uninterrupted listening may be the most powerful gift we have to offer.

### Creative Takeaway:

This experience helps to strengthen the inner compass by helping clients view their entire journey holistically. It also helps them process suppressed emotions by articulating the story, which increases the capacity for emotional intimacy. Yet, the most important point of this exercise is to give them the chance to appreciate strengths and notice that times of crisis and disappointment can be a springboard for growth in the next decade.

Thus, it reduces fear about negative events and increases appreciation for their own remarkable capacity for resilience.

## 3. Discovery of the True Self

The third method of discovery is a self-assessment called the True Tilt Profile an assessment we designed to dig underneath surface personality patterns to discover the true self.

This tool unveils the unconscious inner drivers of their ear-

ly ego patterns. It explains where they began (early patterns), but also makes it clear that they can grow beyond these early patterns too. This distinction is what makes the assessment so powerful. Instead of putting people in a box for life, it honors that we move from dualistic learning to non-dualistic learning as we mature and become more agile (less rigid).

The goal of this discovery process is to determine the path of each client's development journey and what part of the self may have been ignored or left unexamined thus far in the development journey. Are they living a superficially derived script that came from external drivers? Or one that comes from an integrated, non-dualistic self that can produce a peak level of creative output right now? If they are still living a script that isn't authentic because of split aspects of self, then I know they will inevitably experience "the fall" of the superficial script brought about by their inner saboteur.

> "Being a witness to the whole story of someone's life is a gift to both the observer and the storyteller."

In this case, I know it is my job to be the healer that asks how their current script is serving them and to challenge them to examine the motives that may lay dormant under the hood of their safe script for life.

**Creative Takeaway:**

If clients are living a story that is evidence of their unfolding true self, then we will most likely be able to actualize some rich creative output during my time with them. If not, we may be taking one step in a larger journey that will unfold later.

Either way, my job is to help them increase self-awareness and self-knowledge, so they are able to come into contact with reality and their true nature more fully.

### 4. The Social Mirror that Matters

The superficial script comes about when we are children, of course. Sometimes we adopt the script our parents taught us. Sometimes we rebel and choose an opposite script that attempts to correct our parents' "ill-conceived plan" in order to improve it. But the earliest script is almost always unsatisfactory to the unfolding true self that wants to create a more authentic story that is ours alone.

The purpose of accelerated development through coaching may be to assist with the choice of courage to live this authentic story. We know that the process can be enriched by learning how to sort social feedback and by deciding what matters to our true self and what doesn't. Only then can we see ourselves more realistically, through social mirrors that matter. These might be the family we create, our team at work, our circle of friends.

No one decides to do the hard work of soul growth in a vacuum. We are interested only when we see ourselves collide with a social circle about whom we care and choose to take responsibility for our impact. We can't be successful social beings if we ignore the influence we have on those we care about.

For this phase of the coaching process, we developed a tool that is a big departure from traditional 360s. It is a web app that is user-driven and enables clients to collect input about how they are showing up – a little at a time and in a variety of contexts. Instead of collecting feedback in a "once and done" 360 process that is overwhelming to digest all at once, we devised and built a web app where clients can have autonomy over their own emotional safety and readiness. With this tool, they can collect observations from social groups they value and control the timing and experience themselves (and with the support of their coach). This increases psychological safety and provides positive reinforcement because they will be able to collect input again after improvements.

**Creative Takeaway:**

The Tilt365 Positive Influence Predictor offers autonomy and repeatability so that change can be measured over time and improvements offer validation and evidence of change. This increases inner self-respect and helps new behaviors practiced to stick as new habits.

Based on positive psychology, we've documented that increasing inner character strengths is what increases outer agility for a variety of contexts. Positive social influence expands and flow happen

### Coaching: A Love Story

I always say that we have a choice in how we grow. Either we take responsibility for how we affect others, then commit to proactively change behaviors one at a time for incremental improvement, or we get (what I like to call) "the brick in the head." Ignoring the consequences of our actions will eventually catch up with us and life will inevitably deliver a crisis to force our growth.

Even the inner saboteur has a goal in mind – to unfold our true self. Indeed, the authentic story of the true self seems to be a spontaneous process designed to

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> We will most likely be able to actualize some rich creative output during my time with them.

ultimately engage *our own love story with ourselves*. Our resilience and inner confidence are the result

It is such an honor to be a coach; to be a witness to this journey over and over; to have the privilege of observing whatever is unfolding when a person comes into our lives.

We anticipate transformation when clients show up in our path. Sometimes it unfolds. Sometimes we are just a small step in their journey. But we have to be ready for them. We have to be prepared to fall in love with their story and give them the most important gift one human can give another: the gift of unconditional regard and delight in who they are, *right now*, as well as a co-conspirator and *co-creator of the life that is yet to be*.

Our simple task, we know, is to believe that every client has everything they need, right there inside.

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