

Growth Edge Coaching

I've noticed for many years the commonalities in how people relate to difficulty, struggle, stuckness, and also blessings and freedom in their lives. Being introduced to Adult Development has helped me make sense of my clients' and my own patterns of thought and behavior in a more profound way.

20 years ago, I was told by a fortune teller that one day I would earn my living by teaching people in the corporate world how to suffer less. It didn't make much sense to me at the time and I laughed it off, yet it's one lens of looking at my coaching philosophy now. I think I'm doing my work well when I can help my clients see how we can all be bigger and more resourceful than our current circumstances, and move through life with more joy and ease by making small yet intentional changes. Growth Edge Coaching has given me a framework and tools to support my clients more effectively.

James Flaherty, the founder of new Ventures West where I first trained as a coach in 2011 gave me my first introduction to vertical development. I then studied Immunity to Change with Bob Keegan and a few years later met Growth Edge Coaches Wendy Bittner and Carolyn Caughlin from Cultivating Leadership who facilitated a Leadership Program I attended at my former employer Google. What these experiences had in common, and what is also at the root of my personal philosophy around developmental coaching, is the fact that I felt really seen, supported, and yet challenged to grow. A deep understanding of our meaning making system is a major ingredient to compassionate and effective support on our developmental journey. I remember thinking every time Wendy and Carolyn asked or responded to a question "how do they know how to go exactly to where it matters?" I was intrigued and wanted to learn more. I enrolled in Growth Edge Coach Training in 2018 and never looked back.

Here are a few of the many helpful learning moments from this training that really resonated with me and that I aspire to bring to my coaching:

- We are always evolving. Development doesn't stop at a certain age. Yet growth through the different stages requires intention and focus. A coach and/or a community of people can provide an invaluable holding environment on this journey.
- No developmental stage is inherently better than the other. Development is not a race to the finish line.
- "How could I be wrong?" is a powerful question to check assumptions and stay in discovery.
- "How can I make the other person the hero?" can give us powerful insights into different perspectives and reveal some of our own blindspots.
- The questions "What am I not seeing?" or "What do I not want to see?" spark powerful insights.
- Looking for bright spots can unlock a lot in a world where we often get too caught up in fixing what's not working.
- When dealing with overload and complexity, working increasingly harder can be counter productive. Cultivating a spacious mind and body creates the conditions for more effective leadership.
- Patience, gentleness, and compassion for self and others is one of the most important coaching ingredients, both for the coach and the client.

Below are a number of examples to illustrate how I have supported clients with Growth Edge Coaching:

1. From technical expert to departmental leader
This client used to be a senior technical expert with a big and somewhat slow-moving technology company. From there, he had recently transitioned to a fast paced start-up and struggled with the new and increased responsibility of leading a department through disruptive change. He became very reactive in frequent moments of stress and many colleagues found it hard to work with him. He lost confidence in his abilities to the extent that he dreaded coming into the office. We worked on creating more space for him which made him less reactive to stress. He became clearer about what his definition of success was. We used the developmental

map to look at how he needed and wanted to step back from being the technical expert. This allowed him to embrace being more of an explorer of possibilities, which in turn helped him become a more inspiring leader.

2. Embracing increased management responsibility

This client in a software company hired me as his coach because he found the transition from front line manager to manager of managers hard and confusing. His scope had grown dramatically, and he was now responsible for areas in which he wasn't a subject matter expert. He also started managing former peers, which only added to the complexity of his new role. His boss didn't give him much guidance. My client felt pulled into too many different directions with conflicting stakeholder opinions. During the coaching engagement, he discovered the importance of leading with his own voice, while still working collaboratively. He found greater ease in decision making, delegation, and holding others accountable.

3. Balancing family and work commitments

This client struggled to balance a busy job in an engineering company with her roles as wife, mother, and community member. As we started working together, we explored her torn-ness between what she thought was expected of her at work, and how she wanted to be present with her family. She learnt to question her assumptions about expectations others may have of her, and her fear of letting others down. She developed a new definition of success for herself and gained more confidence in pushing back, asking others for help, and letting go of her guilt. She found working with the developmental map hugely empowering, and even though she started drawing tighter boundaries at work, she got promoted into a more senior role.