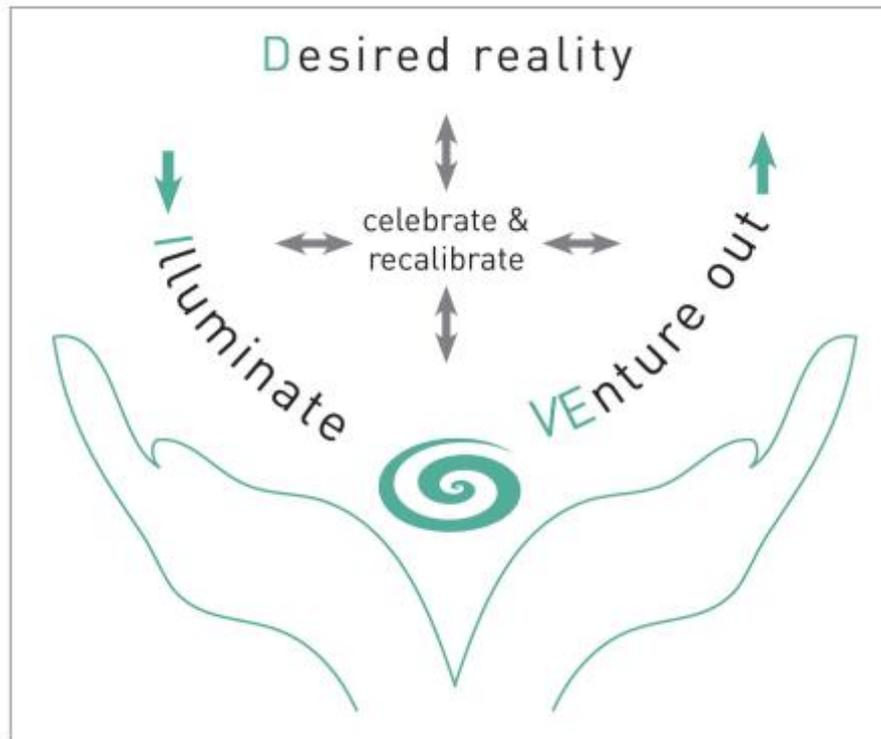


## MY COACHING PROCESS: The DIVE model

By Kerry Acheson

I designed the DIVE model as my approach to coaching, which is an acronym for **D**esired reality, **I**lluminate and **V**enture out. In each session, we DIVE, taking the plunge into the adventure of the unknown.



*The DIVE model*

### **Relationship**

The two hands symbolize the client-coach relationship. Both hands are equally essential in establishing a unique working relationship that is collaborative and robust. Structuring the parameters of the process, from contracting to ending, is inextricable from the relationship. In the first session we will discuss the coaching contract, which clarifies the expectations and nature of the process. We will discuss the duration of coaching, depending on various factors. At the end of the coaching programme, we will have a closing review session. The purpose of this session is to reflect and feed back on the experience of the coaching process and to consolidate gains.

I believe it is the coaching relationship that has the biggest impact on the coaching outcome, and therefore I need to be present with my heart and backbone for my client. I want to foster SAFETY and, CHALLENGE as the dual characteristics of the coaching relationship.

With regards to *safety*, I want to communicate verbally and non-verbally in such a way that my client feels understood, accepted without judgment, and respected. Establishing a sense of safety in a collaborative working alliance builds a robust foundation that can allow for challenge.

*Challenge* refers to taking my client to the edge of their thinking, inviting them to dive in courageously to articulate what they want, to take ownership of what they need, voice what it is they want to pursue, and identify how they want to go about that. Challenge refers to respectfully and compassionately holding my clients accountable to their own expressed preferences.

The *process* of change and learning is depicted by the curved line that is held by the hands. We dive beneath the surface of things to where deeper meanings lie. Clients courageously dive into exploring their inner and outer world, face difficult truths and the frustration of being more conscious before competency develops, before rising into conscious competency.

At the most central, deepest part of the curve is a spiral. This spiral symbolises tuning in to my clients' most authentic experience of themselves. It is the relationship that enables this to be surfaced and strengthened. From this place, passion, inspiration, resilience and vitality can be engaged.

### ***Desired reality***

At the top and centre of the DIVE model is the client's *desired reality*, which is the goal, objective, or preferred direction that my client would like to achieve. We hold this desired reality at the forefront of the coaching process right the way through. Establishing a clear, relevant, valued goal or desired reality is the cornerstone of the coaching process. It is my mandate. I invite my clients to dream, to use their imagination to visualize their desired future reality as fully as possible. From this clarified vision of the desired reality, it is possible to begin to build a pathway forward.

### ***Illuminate***

*Illumination* refers to awareness-raising and exploration. In particular, we explore the current realities, the possibilities, and the available resources in service of my client's desired reality.

### ***VEnture out***

The awareness gleaned informs the planning of actions that will be implemented in the *venturing out* component. The phrase '*Venturing out*' captures the active and adventurous aspects of this part of the coaching session. We wrap up each coaching session by reflecting on key learnings and take-outs. Clients are invited to identify what it is they would like to commit to think about, try out or do in relation to their goals before our next session.

### ***Celebration and recalibration***

*Celebration* and *recalibration* serves to link each subsequent session with the preceding session, taking into account what has happened in the time between.

*Recalibration* involves checking in with where my client is currently at, as well as checking in with the developments that have taken place since the preceding conversation. We recalibrate to attend to what is currently pressing and compelling for my client to work with, while still holding the pre-determined goals in mind. Recalibration involves the question: 'What does knowing what you now know change?' The impact of new learnings needs to keep being assimilated into the way the desired reality and pathways to get there are perceived. Recalibration is necessary because the components

of my model are not discrete, but instead are dynamic and each impacts on the others as the learning process progresses.

In terms of *celebration*, I have an image of a person holding precious treasures that have been discovered from an adventure. I want there to be a sense of wonder in asking 'what did you find?' We celebrate what has been discovered both in the session as well as in the time since the previous session. Celebration is about acknowledging progress, every step of the way, no matter how small. We celebrate the 'aha' moments and clarity that is yielded through the illuminating exploration. We celebrate the steps achieved in the venturing out. We celebrate the beauty, uniqueness and power of the unique personal resources that come to light as my client gets in touch with who they really are.

The arrow is 2-way because the very marking of significance has an impact and creates change. It builds momentum, raises a sense of mastery and self-efficacy, and sustains motivation. My client's ability to access their resilience and inspiration is strengthened as we witness and affirm these jewels. What we turn our attention to grows, and therefore we focus on making what *is* working visible.

Having outlined my coaching model, I will end off with a quote by Eleanor Roosevelt: "Believe in yourself. You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you stop to look fear in the face... You must do that which you think you cannot do... The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dream."