PRESENCE IN COACHING

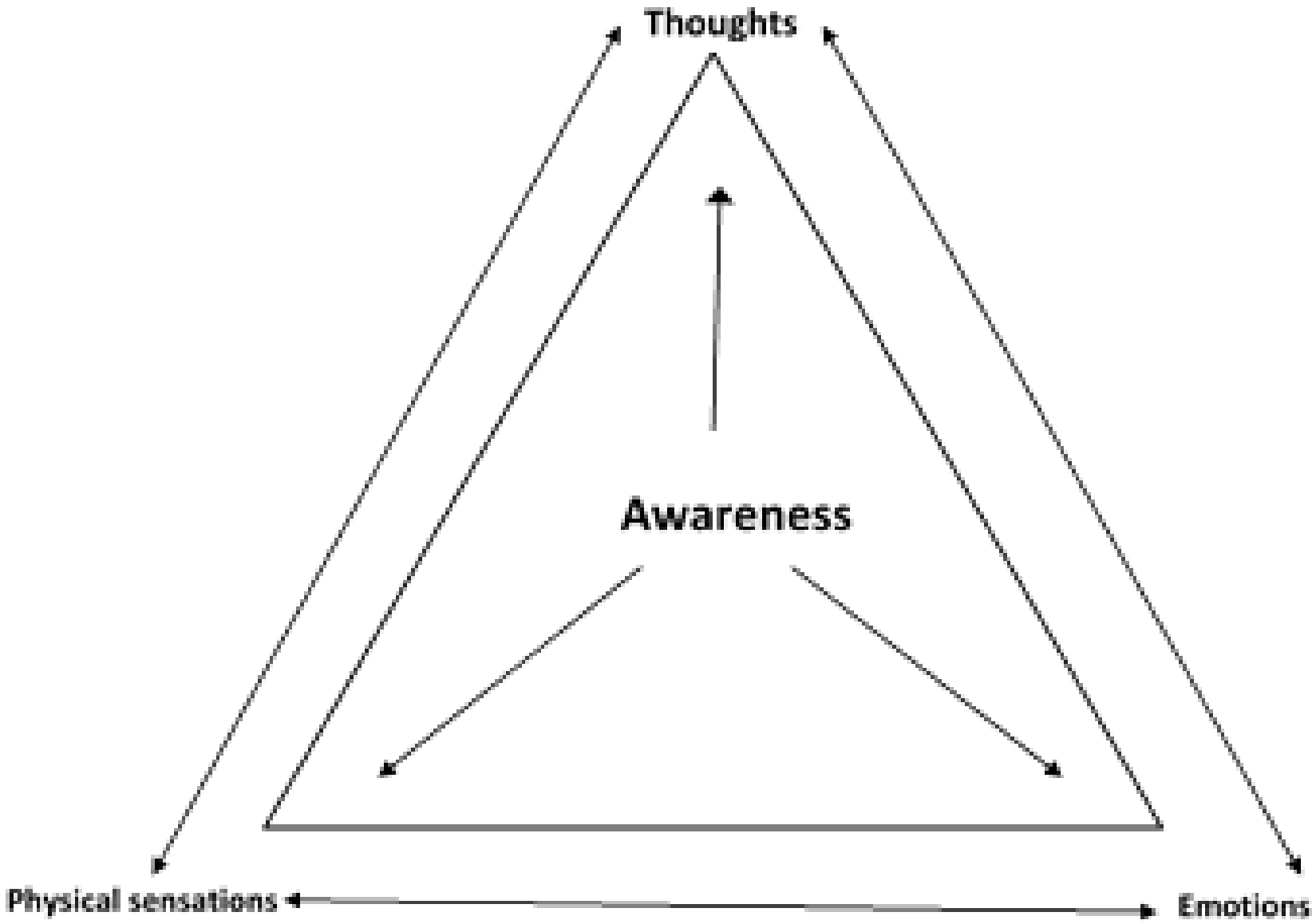
The role of mindfulness and compassion

Being present. Listening deeply. Connecting compassionately.

A practical webinar for coaches
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Presence is not just something we bring to coaching; it is something we cultivate within ourselves

TRIANGLE OF AWARENESS



The role of the body and the breath



Why presence matters in coaching

The experience of being listened to can be as important as the questions asked.

When we are fully present, we notice words, emotions and also what may be left unsaid

People are more able to explore when they feel heard fully and respected

A calm, curious coach can help create space for reflection rather than rushing towards solutions

Presence supports connection, trust and purposeful conversation

A question to begin

“Think of a time when someone made you feel truly listened to. What did they do that helped you feel heard?”

Listening and being present

We can’t hear fully while our attention is somewhere else.

Listening on autopilot: preparing the next question, advice or interpretation

Listening with presence: staying curious, attentive and open to what is emerging

Listening to respond: focusing on what we want to say next

Listening with presence: noticing our own reactions without allowing them to take over

Mindfulness: the foundation of presence

Mindfulness is paying attention to present-moment experience with openness and less judgement.

Notice where your attention is.

Recognise thoughts, feelings and bodily cues as they arise.

Pause before reacting or moving into problem-solving.

Gently return attention to the person and the conversation.

Practice : arrive and attend

A short grounding practice

Feel your feet supported by the floor.

Notice the natural rhythm of your breathing; there is no need to change it.

Notice sounds, sensations and thoughts as they come and go.

When attention wanders, gently bring it back.

Ask yourself: “What would it mean to offer this quality of attention to my next conversation?”

Mindfulness: the pause before the response

Mindfulness is not emptying the mind; it is noticing where attention has gone and gently returning.

Notice: What is happening in me and in the conversation?

Anchor: Feel your feet on the floor or one natural breath.

Allow: Make room for silence, uncertainty or emotion.

Choose: Respond to what is actually needed, not just the first impulse.

COACHING EXAMPLE

Instead of filling a pause with another question, notice the urge to intervene. Allow a little silence. Then ask: “What feels most important to stay with here?”

Micro-practice: one conscious breath before your next question.

Mindfulness: the foundation of presence

Our inner state influences how we listen, interpret and respond.

When we are rushed

We may interrupt, jump to solutions, miss emotion or become attached to an outcome.

When we are self-critical

We may over-prepare, fear silence, doubt our judgement or feel responsible for “fixing” the coachee.

When we are present

We have more room to listen, notice assumptions, tolerate uncertainty and respond thoughtfully.

The aim is not to be perfectly calm. It is to notice what is happening and return to a more intentional response.

Compassion: the human quality of presence

Compassion combines awareness of difficulty with a wish to respond helpfully.

Warmth: communicating respect and care

Curiosity: seeking to understand rather than assume

Non-judgement: making room for the person’s experience

Courage: staying alongside difficulty without rushing to remove it

Boundaries: being supportive without taking responsibility away from the coachee

Compassion begins with ourselves

How we speak to ourselves can shape how we show up with others.

Notice your inner critic: “I should know what to say.”

Replace harsh self-talk with a more balanced response: “I can pause, listen and stay curious.”

Acknowledge your own limits and make space to reset.

Treat mistakes as opportunities to reflect and learn.

Reflection: What do you say to yourself after a session that feels difficult. What could you say to yourself to make your inner dialogue more compassionate

Three anchors for coaching presence

A simple framework to use before and during a conversation.

PAUSE

Create a moment before responding.

NOTICE

Notice thoughts, feelings and cues.

CONNECT

Return to the person with curiosity and care.

Practice: listen without fixing

In pairs or small groups (5–7 minutes).

Person A speaks for two minutes about a current, manageable challenge.

Person B listens without interrupting, advising or planning the next question.

Notice the urge to fix; **pause** and return attention to the speaker.

Reflect back one thing you heard, then swap roles.

Debrief: What helped you feel heard? What was difficult?

Coaching scenario: resist the urge to fix

A coachee says: “I keep letting everyone down. I should be coping better.”

A less present response

“You just need to be more organised. Have you tried making a list?”

A response with more presence: Pause, Connect with the Body & the Breath..

“It sounds as though you are carrying a lot. What feels hardest about this at the moment?”

What gets in the way of presence?

Notice barriers with curiosity rather than self-criticism.

Time pressure and competing demands

The need to be helpful, competent or have the answer

Strong emotions; our own or the coachee’s

Assumptions, bias or jumping to conclusions

Digital distractions and fatigue

Taking presence into everyday coaching

A simple before, during and after routine.

BEFORE: take three steady moments to arrive; set an intention to be curious

DURING: pause, notice and reconnect when attention wanders

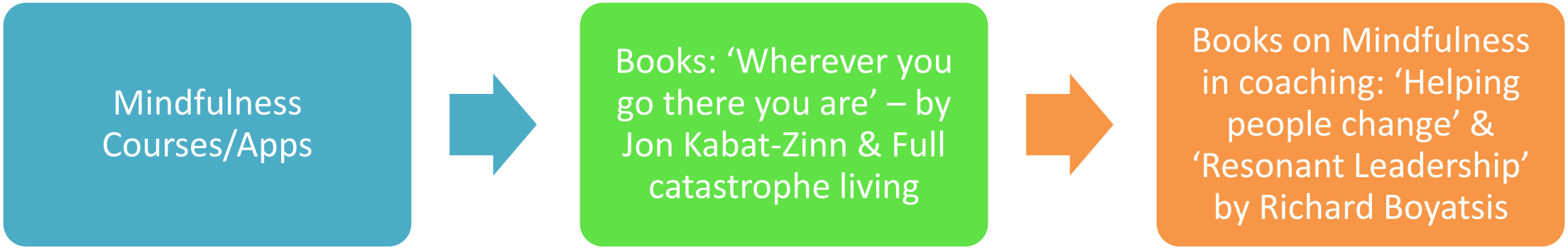
AFTER: reflect without judgement; what helped connection, and what might I try next time?

BETWEEN SESSIONS: protect brief recovery time where possible

One intention to take away

“What is one small thing you will do to bring more mindfulness and compassion into your next coaching conversation?”

Further Study/Resources



Presence gives us space.

Compassion guides our response.

Connection makes growth possible.

Thank you

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PRESENCE • COMPASSION • CONNECTION