

Your GREAT Coaching Career



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by Eric Maisel

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1. Your Great Coaching Career

I've been coaching creative and performing artists and other creatives for more than thirty years. I've worked with famous artists and unknown artists, young artists just starting out and octogenarian artists, full-time artists and artists who in their day jobs are lawyers, government workers, therapists, and blacksmiths.

My clients live in the United States, Canada, England, Germany, Iran, Australia, Japan, South Africa—everywhere in the world. We work together via the phone or Skype and via email on all of the issues that creative folks face: survival issues, issues of resistance and blockage, existential sadness, productivity, marketing and promoting their creative wares, distraction addictions, everything.

Most new coaches are not really ready for this adventure or willing to embark on this adventure. They are psychologically reluctant, pining for a kit with instructions and more clarity, linearity, and straightforwardness than can possibly exist. At the same time, and to make matters worse, they are also typically psychologically reluctant to actually work with clients. They are often over-worried that they aren't prepared enough, that maybe they'll mess up the coaching or get pushback from unhappy customers, that they'll blank out in a session and have no idea what to do, that they'll get too involved in their clients' dramas and burn out, that—well, the list goes on and on. Most new coaches are so worried about things of this sort that they actually do not want clients.

This being the case, they naturally obsess about clients—about having them, about not having them, about what it would be like to work with them, about how difficult it might be to work with them, and so on. Obsessing this way, they fall into the trap of thinking that coaching is primarily or exclusively a client-based sort of thing. But a rich and successful coaching practice is actually something very different from that: it is a container for your many interests, activities, and pursuits and a vehicle for doing meaningful work of all sorts.

I don't think that the best way to conceptualize a creativity coaching practice or any other coaching practice—a life coaching practice, a business coaching practice, a wellness coaching practice, a spiritual coaching practice, etc.—is as an exclusively “working with clients” sort of thing. I think that the wiser, better and much more enjoyable way is to see it as an expansive meaning opportunity that

allows you to write, lead groups, create products, run retreats, help organizations, develop programs and, yes, work one-on-one with some clients.

Imagine having 15 clients a week, every week of the year, at \$100 a session. That's \$75,000 annually, give or take. But it is very hard to have 15 clients even for one week, let alone for fifty weeks! Given that clients come and go, that might mean trying to attract hundreds of clients in a year. Plus, would you even want that many client sessions week in and week out? For many coaches, who find five sessions a day taxing and can't really do more than that, that would mean three full days of clients plus another two days of practice-building each week, meaning that your whole week would be devoted to client finding-and-coaching and nothing else. Would you want that?

What if you could make the same amount of annual income or even more while seeing only a handful of clients a week, say between two and four? Wouldn't you perhaps prefer that life to a client-centered life? How might this "other" coaching life look? Down the road, when you've accomplished the sorts of things we'll be discussing like finding partners and building your list, you might make \$50,000 annually from teaching your online "My Great Creativity Class" to 100 folks (charging \$500 for your 8-week class and running it three times a year with thirty or so participants each time). You might make \$15,000 from working with clients (that's just three clients a week). You might make another \$5000 from running one "Great Creativity Retreat" annually.

Maybe you'll facilitate one online support group for mid-career painters or just-graduated music majors or fantasy romance writers and make \$12,000 annually from that (8 in the group at \$125/month for the year). Maybe there's a book in there, too. Maybe there's some passive income in there, too, from products you create. That's what an expansive practice might look like: \$80,000+ in income, only \$15,000 of which comes from direct one-on-one work with clients.

This, though it requires savviness and real work, is doable and sustainable, whereas trying to build a one-on-one coaching practice that earns that same amount annually is much heavier lifting. Is it easy to get 100 folks to attend your online classes or trainings annually? Much easier than acquiring hundreds of clients! Let me repeat this key: I think it makes much more sense to think of creativity coaching or any coaching as an expansive meaning opportunity that

offers all sorts of possibilities rather than as primarily a one-on-one coaching sort of thing.

Let's take a step back. What exactly is coaching? It's not an arcane or mysterious idea: it is simply being of help. It is easy enough to be of help—if that's what you want to be. If, however, it's more important that you be right, that you get your way, that you look good, or that you "win" when you interact with people, well, that's another matter. But if you would actually like to be of help and help your son, the players on the soccer team you coach, your friend, or your coaching clients, that's actually a pretty straightforward matter. And there are lots of ways of being of help in addition to sitting across from another person on a Skype call!

You've already been coaching—for free. You typically do not charge your child to help him learn how to use the toilet, tie his shoelaces, or recover from a rebuff on the playground. You typically do not charge your friend to listen to her current love problems and sympathize and make suggestions. You typically do not charge your co-worker for helping him understand how to use some new bit of technology. You coach for free all the time! It's simply a manifestation of your everyday desire to be decent, friendly, and useful.

Coaching is simply helping another person or groups of people. You draw on your life experience and your wisdom and you learn by doing. There is no other way to learn but by doing. That means that your first clients are getting an unseasoned you—but someone has to get an unseasoned you! Your first classes will get an unseasoned you, the first presentation you make to a group will get an unseasoned you, and so on. There are many things that you might try that will together amount to your great coaching practice: but they all require that you give them a try, perhaps fall on your face, get off the mat with some egg on your face, and learn via trial-and-error.

If you'd like to be of help and if you're willing to be human, make mistakes, and deal with some failures, then a very wide world is open to you. What will your particular great coaching practice look like? Well, first let's get the following question answered: are you looking for a full-time job or are you looking for a revenue stream? Either can be great! You can create something that earns you a living or you can create something that is an adjunct to the other things you currently do, like writing novels, seeing psychotherapy clients, teaching at a

college, or painting in a garret. Which will it be for you? Let's look at that question in our next lesson.

2. Choosing a Revenue Stream or a Full Income

Quite often, someone who is contemplating taking one of my creativity coaching trainings will ask, “Is creativity coaching a viable profession?” I typically respond by saying that I see creativity coaching as more of a potential revenue stream than as a full income, though it can be that full income if you manifest tons—not ounces or pounds—of entrepreneurial spirit and energy, think of coaching in the expansive way I’m describing it, and put in as many hours at it as any full-time employee does.

These are really two quite different ideas: revenue stream and full income. However, I think that “revenue stream” is perhaps a bit of a misleading phrase, since it conjures up the image of something flowing continually, albeit gently. I think that the typical coach’s income is much more intermittent than steady and rather resembles the income flow of her clients, if she is a creativity coach—that is, of writers, painters, musicians, actors, etc.—who make money very irregularly and intermittently, say when a book sells to a publisher, when a painting sells to a collector, when they land a gig or a role, etc.

I think that this is what the typical coach who is not turning his or her whole life over to coaching can expect: an intermittent, modest inflow of income. Is this worth the bother? I think it is; I think this version of a coaching life can prove very valuable, enjoyable, and, in its own way, profitable. What might this “revenue stream” picture look like? Let’s take a look at a coaching practice where you focus on just three things and see how that might play itself out.

Let’s say that you create a model where clients want to stay with you for a significant period of time, rather than for just one or two sessions: say, for the length of time it takes them to write and publish their novel. That is, say that you angle for long-term clients rather than short-time clients. And say that in your model you chat with clients (via the phone or Skype) two times a month. And say that you manage to have five clients whom you charge \$150 per session. This amounts to ten monthly sessions, or \$1500 monthly, without expenses (as you aren’t maintaining an office, just Skyping off your computer), for an annual income from this aspect of your practice of \$18,000, for two days of work a month (presuming that you do your five sessions all on the same day—say, every second Tuesday).

Next, say that you focus on running exactly one physical workshop a year (that is, as opposed to an online workshop) where you gather folks in a place you would like to be—for me, these places are Paris, London, Rome, Prague, etc. Let's say that you can get twenty folks to come to your weeklong workshop in Paris and that you charge them \$595 for the workshop fee. That's \$12,000 gross. Now, say that your plane ticket to Paris costs you \$1500, your studio rental costs you \$1000, and the venue rental for the workshop costs you \$1500. That's \$4000 in expenses (which, by the way, are tax deductible). So, you will have made \$8000 from running this workshop—and had magical evenings in Paris to boot!

Next, say that you create exactly one online class that you run a few times a year. Say that you manage to get ten folks to take your online class and that you run it twice a year for six weeks at a time, meaning (depending on how you organize your class), that you meet with your ten folks for ninety-minutes six times, or twelve times for the two classes, meaning that this activity (of course not counting prep, marketing, etc.) takes twelve ninety-minute chunks of your time. Let's say that you are charging \$395 for this six-week class. That's another \$8000 gross, with no expenses.

So, for these three activities, you are spending two Tuesdays a month working with clients, twelve ninety-minute chunks annually on your online class, and a week in Paris, for a gross total of \$34,000. This is not a fortune but this is also not nothing. I'm sure you can tell that how well this works for you depends largely on how easy or hard it will prove to get those five clients, get those twenty people to come to Paris, and get those twenty people to take your two classes. If doing all that takes a ton of time and energy, this might prove hardly worth it. But what if you had systems in place that made getting those clients and participants easy rather than hard (and we will look at those systems!)? In that case, if getting clients and participants proved relatively easy, then how would this vision sound?

This is the “revenue stream” vision: in this case, focusing on a few clients, one workshop, and one class (delivered twice). A “full-time income” vision would involve both more of the same—more clients, more workshops, more classes—and also different activities (like writing books, creating products, developing programs, etc.). Each coach and prospective coach will have to decide for himself or herself if either of these visions, revenue stream or full-time income, is worth the bother and will have to do a personal cost-benefit analysis: are the benefits

worth the cost in time that could be devoted to some other pursuit or life purpose choice?

If you decide that the benefits are worth it, then you will need to become an entrepreneur. You will be running a small business and must come at it with entrepreneurial energy and a willingness to market, promote, and all the rest. A doctor on staff at a busy HMO doesn't have to recruit patients. Public school teachers don't have to recruit students and civil servants don't have to hustle up their work. By contrast, a new restaurant must attract customers or fail. An artist must find buyers for her paintings or starve. An independent trucker must find product to haul. And in this new economy, we may be approaching a time when everyone is obliged to be an entrepreneur. Doesn't that feel like the new reality already?

Therapists, dentists, acupuncturists, landscape designers must build their practice or find additional work—the therapist joining the staff of a home for troubled girls, the dentist dabbling in real estate on the side, the acupuncturist adding acupressure to her list of services, the landscape designer waiting tables at night, and so on.

As a coach, you are essentially a small business. And most small businesses fail. Becoming a coach is exactly like starting a small business, with exactly the same sorts of risks associated with starting any small business.

It is fine to ignore this reality, if you like, just as it is fine for a novelist to ignore the long odds against him constructing a writing life that manages to pay the bills or a piano student in conservatory choosing to ignore the long odds against her having a solo piano career. Sometimes it is important to ignore reality because we have a dream and because we hope to prove the exception. But that doesn't mean that the people who are saying that the odds are long against us succeeding are wrong in their opinion. The odds are long!

If you need coaching to replace your current day job or your current career, if you need it to be the thing that keeps your poorly-paying writing or painting career afloat, if you need it to be the way that you make the transition out of your life as a therapist or teacher, or if you need it in any other sense to amount to a real, full-time living or a decent revenue stream, you will have to become an active entrepreneur. You can love and embrace the marketing of your coaching practice

or you can hate it and only do it through gritted teeth, but whether you love it or hate it you will have to do it with great intensity!

Personally, I think it is possible to love it! But whether you love it or hate it the headline remains the same: if you want a coaching practice you will need to become an entrepreneur. Nor is it a great problem if you currently lack enthusiasm for becoming an entrepreneur. That enthusiasm may well grow—it may even grow as you proceed through our lessons and see the sorts of things that you get to do as a coach.

Take a moment now and think through the central question of this lesson: do you think you are after a full-time coaching practice (defined in the broad way I defined it in the last lesson) or a significant revenue stream? You may not be able to answer that question right now; you may be too early in the process to know. But give the matter a little thought. Walk around the lake and see which model seems more attractive to you or truer for you. Naturally, you can opt for the revenue stream model and grow into the full income model; or you can orient yourself toward the full income model right off the bat. Give this all some thought!

3. Genuinely Wanting Clients

The first tasks in building a coaching practice are a pair of psychological ones: first, accepting that little may prove straightforward and, second, deciding that you genuinely want clients. Let's look closely at this second issue, as it regularly derails coaches. If you only *think* that you want to work with clients but don't *actually* want to work with clients, naturally you will find ways to not get your practice up and running. You will need to get clear on this in your own mind!

If you're holding in a corner of consciousness that you're not really ready to coach and that you don't want clients until "x" happens (until you get your website built, until you get an office space, until you figure out how Skype works, until you get more training, until you get more experience, etc., etc.), that fear and ambivalence will seriously and negatively affect your practice-building motivation and momentum. Try to shed those fears and that ambivalence and internally announce, "Yes, I really want clients!" and, "Yes, I am ready for clients!"

If you aren't sure, please try to clear away that anxiety, doubt, and reluctance by explaining what your worries are and how you are going to allay them. For example:

Worry: I don't know what to charge. Solution: I'm just going to decide!

Worry: I don't know where to meet with clients. Solution: I have a phone, don't I?!

Worry: I don't have much experience yet. Solution: Let me get some!

Etc.

If you think it might serve you to do so, please explain to yourself what you think is getting in the way of you wanting clients and what you intend to do about it. That is, name your worries and then articulate your solutions. When you have worked this through—and if you can—please conclude your self-analysis by exclaiming "Yes, I really want clients!" and "Yes, I am ready for clients!"

Here's how Martha, a coach-in-training, tackled this exercise:

Worry: I'm not an established artist myself so no one will take me seriously.

Solution: Continue to have your hand in a daily art practice and continue to stay educated about the art world in order to feel more confident.

Worry: I will advertise my services, get started, and then decide I don't want to be a creativity coach after all.

Solution: Yes, it is a bit of my modus operandi to get really involved with something and then lose interest. But I'm also aware that when I "lose interest" that is often more about fear of failure. A solution is to keep this dynamic in mind and challenge it when the time comes.

Worry: The populations I am most often interested in serving are often marginalized and sometimes without financial resources. I'm afraid of being too lenient, too often, with my fees in order to "help." I simply do not have enough of my own resources to keep that (codependent) behavior going.

Solution: A few ideas: One, decide what portion of my practice will be on a sliding scale or a pro bono basis and charge full fee for the rest. Two, consider doing groups or workshops at lower rates to make services more accessible and affordable to a larger number of people; and offer individual work at full fees. Three, remember that I cannot give to others if my own well is empty.

Worry: Santa Fe is full of pretentious artists who work to maintain their egos and their place in the so-called hierarchy by excluding others. I don't want to help any of them.

Solution: Some ideas: Likely these people would not come for creativity coaching in the first place. If they do, I can work with their egos from a place of knowing that underneath it is likely a lot of insecurity and pain. Also, charge top dollar for the fact I will be dealing with a lot of my own countertransference ...

Worry: My creativity coaching sessions will turn into psychotherapy sessions.

Solution: Stay mindful of this possibility, maintain boundaries, and in my marketing and promoting efforts highlight the difference between psychotherapy and coaching.

With these things addressed - and the comfort that comes with staying aware of the solutions – I can indeed say, “Yes! I really want clients!”

Another coach-in-training, Laura, responded in the following way:

Even though I have twenty years of professional experience, I suffer from imposter syndrome in almost every aspect of my professional life. I never feel good enough and never feel ready. I'm afraid of showing up and not having all the answers. Of forgetting a technique. Of flubbing my lines. Intellectually, I know that NOBODY has all the answers. I need to squash this now, before I waste any more of my life being afraid!

Worry: I can't start because I don't have a website yet, and I can't make the website until I have my business name and great images to put on the site. I've spent the past two weeks stressing out about the business name, paralyzed about making the wrong choice.

Solution: Last night, I stayed up and forced myself to pick a freaking name and buy the URL! I did it!! I'm excited about it and it feels right.

Worry: I am also selling design services, so my website needs to be freaking amazing so people can see how great my design skills are. I'm overwhelmed!!

Solution: Forget about this aspect of the business for now. It's more important that I launch my healing and coaching services. I can slowly perfect the site and make it what I want later!

Worry: Am I really ready? What if I don't know what to say or do? Also, I have a ton of friends that graduated from accredited coaching programs and I haven't. Will anyone take me seriously? I can't keep taking courses and programs. I'm going to go broke!

Solution: Well, I won't really ever know if I have any answers if I don't show up and start trying it out. As far as the coaching programs go, I am going to have to lean on my life credentials for now and test the waters and just see how it goes.

Worry: I don't know anyone who wants creativity coaching.

Solution: I have the advantage of being in New York City, where there are tons of art schools, art supply stores, and artsy cafes that have bulletin boards and online message boards. I can try to leverage these to find my first clients. When I actually feel comfortable and want to find paying clients, I can ping my art school's alumni Facebook group.

Worry: I haven't exactly been productive in my own art career lately. How will anyone take me seriously as a creativity coach when I myself feel like a failure.

Solution: This is a HUGE one for me, and hurts the most. I need to own where I am in my life instead of feeling ashamed all the time. All I can do is be honest about my own struggle to find my way back to Source, my inspiration, my fire. I'm kindling it now. I don't want to paint myself as a sad-sack or cautionary tale. I've learned a lot along the way. By providing coaching services, I do hope I can help people tap into their fire, and avoid making the same mistakes I've made.

Okay: YES, I really want clients. YES, I am ready!! (or as ready as I'm going to be. LOL)

One proof of your new (or renewed) commitment to working with clients is to actively ask for and seek out clients. This sounds like the following sort of message put out in the world in whatever ways you can manage to put it out in the world (to your own list, by asking others to announce it to their lists, and so on).

+ “I’m opening up four new slots in my creativity coaching practice. As an incentive for starting in April, I’m offering new clients the first half-hour session for free. Sign up for three months of creativity coaching and get the first session for free. Isn’t this the right moment to get your creative life and your creative career back on track?”

[Do you want to offer some free thing or some reduced rate thing? Think about that.]

+ “I love working with creativity coaching clients and my clients benefit dramatically from getting coaching on their creativity issues. If you’ve never tried creativity coaching and aren’t sure if it’s for you, give me a call and we can chat

about whether creativity coaching is right for you. No cost and no obligation—just drop me an email right now and let’s get a chat scheduled.”

[What would you “do” in that chat? Think about that.]

+ “Are you stuck on your dissertation? I’m offering a complete coaching package to see you through the whole dissertation process. We’ll work together for the academic year and we’ll make sure that you get your dissertation done—and accepted! The cost is \$350 a month for the complete package. Can you afford not to get some expert coaching help with your dissertation?”

[Is there some niche clientele that you want to connect with, like graduate students working on their dissertations?]

If you want clients, think through what you want to say to prospective clients. Write out several different sorts of pitches to get in the habit of creating pitches. Then figure out where to send one or more of your pitches. This is critical baseline work in building a great coaching practice.

4. Making Time for Practice-Building

Building a great coaching practice takes real time. Indeed, building any-sized practice, even a part-time one, takes real time. It takes time both in the sense that it takes a long time for a practice to get up and running and in the sense of taking many hours a week of attention on your part. If you want to build a practice, you will need to put in the hours.

How many hours? That will depend. That will depend on whether you are focusing on a few efforts, like attracting clients and running one on-line class, or engaging in many activities at once, like attracting clients, running classes, organizing workshops, writing books, and so on. It will depend on whether you have some natural “feeder system” that supplies you with clients, so that you don’t have to do that much heavy lifting in finding clients, or whether you have a small mailing list, few contacts, and need to keep striving (and struggling) to find clients. Naturally, it will depend.

It may well take you as many hours as any full-time job takes ... or more. But for the sake of this lesson let’s limit a “beginning” number of hours to ten to fifteen hours a week, factoring in that you probably have another job and also a life and can’t devote more hours than that to your practice-building. Remember, this is practice-building time and doesn’t include time spent actually coaching clients.

Those ten-to-fifteen hours will be spent on activities like writing course descriptions for the classes you teach, looking for partners to announce your coaching practice, dreaming up and implementing strategies for attracting clients, finding the services you need (like shopping cart technology for your website or a webmaster to help you build and maintain your website), learning technology (like how to use the web cam that you just purchased for your visual blog), dealing with email requests for information, looking for speaking opportunities, and so on.

Where will those ten-to-fifteen hours come from? You will have to figure that out. Try to paint a picture for yourself of where those ten-to-fifteen hours will come from. This might sound like “I will spend two hours from 8 am to 10 am each Monday, four hours from 4 pm to 8 pm each Tuesday, and four hours each on Saturday and Sunday.” If every week presents you with different scheduling

challenges, try to explain in words how you will deal with finding those fifteen hours (or however many hours) each week.

Because there are so many disparate kinds of things involved in creating your practice, that means that you must get organized and stay organized. You may be spending fifteen minutes on something and then need to switch calmly to some completely different task, spend an hour on it, and then switch again to yet another sort of task. It is not easy to make these sorts of switches unless we are organized and have a clear daily plan, a clear to-do list, and good flexibility, the flexibility to move fluidly from one task to some other, perhaps very different task.

What are you actually doing during those practice-building hours? Let's look at a hypothetical coach who is just starting out and has made the decision to focus on coaching documentary filmmakers. She's made that decision because she herself is a documentary filmmaker, because she knows the territory and empathizes with the plight of documentary filmmakers, and because she would really like to help them.

Getting this clear is already an accomplishment: many new coaches have a lot of trouble concretely naming who they want to work with. If that is a challenge for you, you'll want to think that through and make some decisions as soon as you can, since it is hard to reach clients if you don't know who those clients are. You might decide to remain a generalist or you might decide to specialize but whatever decision you make, making that decision is part of the practice-building process.

So how will Sally, our documentary filmmaker coach, be spending her practice-building hours? First, she has to have a certain sort of conversation with herself that might sound something like the following, "Okay, documentary filmmakers have very little money and are unlikely to pay for coaching unless I can convince them that they will get something really valuable from me. What is it they need that they will also consider valuable? Well, they always need help looking for money and finding money. So maybe I need to focus on how my coaching will help them raise money. They also need to collaborate with others and form a team to get their documentary made and distributed, so maybe I need to remind them or convince them that team-building skills and relationship-building skills are something they really need to learn. Maybe I should also offer a team-building workshop or class with a title that promises a lot, like 'Without a team your

documentary has no chance!’ Well, maybe that’s a little bit negative. How about ‘Create the Great Team Your Documentary Needs!’ That might be it.” And so on.

That is, Sally talks to herself as calmly and as patiently as she can in order to discern what her prospective clients need and want and what services, like individual coaching, classes, workshops, and so on, best meet her clients’ needs. You, too, will want to calmly and patiently think through what your prospective clients are looking for, what they need, and what they are likely or unlikely to be willing to pay for. Might they pay for a class but not individual coaching? Might they pay for individual coaching but only if the benefits of that coaching were made very clear, if your pitch was spot on, or if you became a bit of a brand name? This is the sort of thinking that you need to do, thinking that is a logical part of your initial practice-building time.

In our example Sally has gotten clear about how to name the benefits of working with her—that is, clear on naming what she means to offer—and believes that she can attract both individual clients and workshop participants. Now she has to begin actually building her practice. What might that include? How exactly would she be spending her ten or twenty or thirty hours each week building her practice? Here are twenty things that she might find herself doing—many of them on the same day.

1. She might find herself trying to describe her practice in words. This means sitting down and spending real time creating effective phrases and sentences that communicate who you are, what you are offering, what benefits a client might expect, and so on.
2. She might find herself building her website, a task with many moving parts that includes finding someone to help, picking a look, picking features, generating the words for the site, and so on.
3. She might find herself creating announcements and pitches that will let people know that she is open for business.
4. She might find herself looking for people—partners, let’s call them—who are willing to announce her practice.

5. She might find herself looking for ways of getting known, which might include finding podcasters who are willing to interview her, bloggers who are willing to interview her, and so on.
6. She might find herself setting up her actual practice, which might mean getting set up on Skype, getting a landline, figuring out her filing system or billing system, etc.
7. She might find herself creating a workshop or class or, to begin with, a workshop or class description.
8. She might find herself trying to figure out how and where she is going to run her workshop and class and sifting through the virtually limitless choices available to her, from a series of teleclasses to a retreat center in the south of France to five people in her living room.
9. She might find herself trying to increase her visibility and her name recognition by trying to become a featured blogger on some well-trafficked site—in Sally’s case, maybe the featured coach on some site that documentary filmmakers visit a lot.
10. She might find herself communicating with friends or friends of friends or leads or social media contacts in pursuit of ways of announcing her practice.
11. She might find herself creating products for her website, like an ebook giveaway, a recorded class, etc.
12. She might find herself creating a plan for spreading the word around town about her new practice.
13. She might find herself creating a plan for spreading the word globally about her new practice.
14. She might find herself contemplating paid advertising and investigating how that works and what sort of paid advertising might make sense for her.
15. She might find herself locating outlets for articles that she thinks might be wise to write and, if she locates those outlets, writing those articles.

16. She might find herself making regular daily contact with and regular daily announcements to her social media peeps.

17. She might find herself picking an event like a national conference or annual festival—in Sally’s case, maybe some large documentary filmmaking festival—and deciding that she will attend and network and promote her practice there.

18. She might find herself responding to emails generated by having done the previous seventeen things.

19. She might find herself making an effort to build her email mailing list and, if it has grown large enough, spending time creating her regular newsletter for her list and sending it out to them.

20. She might find herself dealing with a computer glitch, a missed delivery, a broken coffee pot, an unpleasant email, or any one of the other countless tasks and chores that come with running a small business.

To summarize, you will need to find real hours during the week to devote to practice building and then you need to actually use them creating and running your business. Can you get your head ahead around the idea of this being a real business? How does that strike you? I hope it strikes you as eminently doable – because you will need to do it!

5. Looking for and Securing Clients

Let's say that you tackled our third lesson, about genuinely wanting clients, and reached the conclusion that you really do want to coach clients. Say also that you have enough coaching training and life experience to begin working with some free clients and so you bravely recruit some free clients and begin to work with them. A point will come, probably sooner rather than later, when you will begin to want to charge a fee and make money from the work that you're now doing.

Here is another potentially large obstacle: finding the wherewithal to pick your fees and your prices and to announce your fees and your prices. You probably won't go looking for paying clients unless you've first worked it out that you are ready and willing to charge folks for your services. If you don't work this issue out, you may continue coaching for free for far too long or find lots of reasons why you aren't quite ready to secure paying clients. This is another issue that's important to get clear on!

What often proves a subconscious practice-building blocker is needing to figure out when to begin charging (when to move from free clients to paying clients) and what to charge. At some point a coach should and must start charging if his or her intention is to make money. When is that point? In other professions and other lines of work the answer is pretty obvious. When you open your sandwich shop, maybe you give away free chips for a little while but basically customers start paying for their sandwiches right away. Mental health interns who have virtually no experience get paid (or rather, the place where they are working gets paid) right from the beginning. So: try not to work for free for too long!

Imagine that you are opening a sandwich shop. How many days, weeks or months do you want to give away free sandwiches? Or even free chips! But: how much will you charge? It typically worries new coaches what to charge—and often they decide that because of the area in which they live they can't charge as much as someone who lives somewhere else might (for example, someone in a big city or a more affluent area) or because of their lack of experience they can't charge as much as an experienced or well-known coach can charge. These are reasonable enough thoughts—but also traps. First of all, if you're working globally and at a distance, say via the phone or Skype, then you aren't really "anywhere" and your clients are everywhere in the world. Second, a new doctor, a new dentist, or a

new lawyer at a firm doesn't charge less than his or her more experienced colleagues: he or she charges the going rate. Most new professionals "jump right in," so to speak. A new coach can do exactly the same, if he or she decides to do so.

Certainly, there are differences that ought to be taken into account. For instance, when I was in Prague one year presenting workshops, the coaches I met explained that they had to price their services in a way in keeping with the Czech economy and with what Czech folks were accustomed to paying, rather than with what the American market looked like. That made sense. Certainly, it matters whether you are in a rural community or Los Angeles, whether you are working as a spiritual coach with indigents or as an executive coach with top level managers, and so on. But the main point remains: it is important that you charge appropriately real prices for your services and that you start charging these prices sooner rather than later.

It isn't easy to know how to price your services or what exactly to charge. But at some point, sooner rather than later, you must PICK YOUR PRICES, or else you won't be doing any paid coaching. Try not to talk yourself into underpricing yourself just because you can come up with good reasons why a lower price makes some sort of sense. Look at the websites of coaches in your area of expertise or specialty and also at the websites of coaches in other specialties, get a sense of the (very wide) range of prices that coaches charge, and pick a price for your services that, whether or not it is at the top end, is at least not at the low end of the spectrum.

Having decided that you will charge and having decided what amount you will charge (we'll look at the concept of coaching packages in a later lesson), now you must find clients. This task involves creating your pitches—that is, creating language that describes your services and making decisions about what marketing and promoting strategies you intend to employ, like offering a free session or a free consultation call, providing an early bird price or a free gift, and so on—all of which we will look at in a future lesson. It also involves identifying partners—that is, folks with larger lists and wider reach than you have—whom you invite to announce your new practice. Again, we'll look at the idea of partners in a future lesson. And, of course, it involves building your website, another challenge we'll tackle separately.

So: you internally decide that you want clients, you pick your prices, you create your pitches, you locate and contact partners, and you build your website. What else? All of the following:

+ You begin to build your own email list. If, over time, your list grows into the thousands, and if you regularly announce your practice to your list, you can expect a small percentage of the folks on your list to come forward as new clients with each announcement. If, for example, your list has grown to 4000, and if only $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1% of the folks on your list come forward whenever you announce new openings, you will have 10 new clients each time you announce. And that percentage can be much higher when and if you learn how to craft compelling announcements.

+ You endeavor to locate feeder sources (including partners). These are people who funnel clients to you. These might be professionals in some related field who refer clients to you because your work complements and supplements what they do: for example, dentists who send you clients because of the work you do coaching anxiety management. These might be folks at an organization like a university, conservatory, nonprofit, for-profit, website business, or other entity who refer clients to you because you write for them, because you advertise with them, because they've come to know about your work and see you as an expert in your field, etc. Not only do you want folks like these in your life, you want to maintain excellent contact with them, give them "first shot" at your offerings, and in other ways treat them as special, because they ARE special.

+ You will want to build an ongoing public presence and significant name recognition. You might do this via your website, your online classes, the column you do with some large website, the guest blogs you do for some popular blogger, the articles and books you write that build your brand and your name recognition, the podcast series you record, the Internet show you host, and so on. More on this to come!

+ You will want to speak in the world—at conferences, at online conferences, at chamber of commerce meetings, to professional groups, etc.—which of course means growing comfortable speaking in the world. We have a lesson on this coming as well!

+ You will want to cultivate a social media presence, which, if that isn't your cup of tea, might mean focusing on a single social medium that seems most congenial to

you (say Twitter but not Facebook or vice versa), or, if it is your cup of tea, might mean interacting and getting known on several social media.

What this all means is that on a given day of practice-building you might make an announcement to your own mailing list, make an announcement on Facebook, make an announcement on Twitter, email an organization about your availability to speak, email one friend, colleague or partner and ask him or her to pass your announcement on in his or her universe, and so on. If you can manage to embrace these activities with as little resistance, drama and second-guessing as possible, you are on your way to cultivating a practice!

Remember that you are after a rather constant supply of clients, since your goal is not to “keep” clients for all time but rather to help them and then to let them go their way. If clients never left you, how much easier this might all be! But they will leave you and they should leave you. To be sure, a given client may benefit from a coach’s help for years as she manages one challenge, as new challenges arise, as old challenges return, and so on. It is not a sign of “weakness” or a “lack of independence” that a client uses a coach for a long time. But many clients may only need a few sessions or even a single session. Because of this reality, you need new clients to appear regularly. For this to happen, you’re obliged to not only build your practice but to maintain it in the ways I’ve discussed in this lesson and in the ways that we’ll look at in future lessons.

6. Making Big Impact Choices

It's very important to make strategic decisions with regard to your practice-building because each of us has only so many hours in the day and so much energy to devote to our coaching practice (or to anything).

One principle to operate by, and a really important one, is, "Given that I could x in this way or that way, which way has the bigger impact?" For example, you could offer a workshop at your local church that attracts five people who pay \$95 each, for a gross revenue of \$475 (less anything you may have to pay the church for the space rental). Or you could offer that same class online and, if you do a good job of securing partners and getting free advertising for it, attract 30 people from all over the world who pay you \$295 for the workshop, for a gross revenue \$8850 (with zero expenses). That's a real difference!

Now, it may be far easier to attract five people locally than 30 people globally—but it may also not be! Sometimes it is much harder to get people to physically appear at a workshop on a certain date (given everyone's complicated schedules) than it is to get people to join in when they are given schedule flexibility, no travel time, and the other perks of an online class. It would be just about impossible to get thirty people together once a week for several consecutive weeks at your local church—and completely possible to have them take an online class from you. The latter may really be much easier than the former!

So, if you've been holding that it's "easier" to gather people locally, I would ask you to rethink that. In my experience, it is far easier to get people to join in "from a distance" on the Internet—for me, that is the "bigger impact" way of operating. For some of my classes I've had as many as two or three hundred participants. Imagine trying to do that in your neighborhood!

In each of the following pairs of ways of operating, the second choice may prove the bigger impact way of going:

+ Starting your own blog versus becoming a guest blogger on a popular blog or website

- + Starting your own blog versus starting your own blog and also inviting guest bloggers aboard
- + Putting your ebook up on your site versus putting your ebook up on your site and also offering it through an affiliate program to multiple sites
- + Selling your downloadable products from you site versus selling your downloadable products from your site and also selling selected other affiliate downloadable products from your site
- + Sending out a call for new clients via your small mailing list versus finding a way to have people with larger lists put out the call for you
- + Offering an ebook versus offering a full “information product” with both text and audio components (e.g., a “complete program” that includes MP3s or CDs and that you upload to one of the platforms that makes delivery of such media easy).
- + Creating language that invites clients to work with you for a few sessions versus creating language that invites clients to work with you for a full year

Each time you dream up a new thing to offer, think through what approach might create the bigger impact. If you’d like to do some writing on this subject as a way of having a chat with yourself, you might use one or both of the following as prompts:

1. Create language that invites clients to work with you for a year rather than for just a few sessions.
2. Think of something you intend to do with respect to your coaching practice. What are the smaller impact ways of doing it and what are the bigger impact ways of doing it? How much harder (if any harder) are the bigger impact ways of proceeding, do you think?

Here’s how a coach-in-training responded to this lesson. Marjorie wrote:

This lesson on Big Impact is an important one for me. During my thirteen years of life coaching and teaching therapeutic/creative journaling at my school, I was told I should think bigger and that I was playing ‘too

small.' I never listened. Now I'm inspired by the suggestions in this lesson and intend to do the following:

(1) Not only do my blog, but invite guest bloggers aboard

(2) Sell not only my own products but also other affiliate products from my website

(3) Send out a call for new clients using my list but also asking the people I know with bigger lists to please announce me

(4) Begin to teach workshops online

I want to begin to think about what has a bigger impact and also what is smarter in terms of my time and the possible rewards. Nothing is more frustrating than preparing for a class and finding out five days before the start date that it was cancelled due to low registration.

I learned years ago that having my own space/school where I was in control and I could meet the interested students' needs was better than working with institutions where I would prepare and then be let down.

I did get students who would sign up for my on-going class, Write On, and that lasted for over ten years. Students would buy a card of classes and that worked well for me. I had a large enough base whereby students could come and go without me worrying about any individual class having a low turn-out. Now, I want to create something like that for my coaching. The lesson suggests that we create language and a model that invites clients to work with a coach for a year, rather than just some number of sessions, and that's what I want to work on. That is my top priority.

One idea I'm considering is a long-term group that I would coach, with the idea that the members would at its end present/exhibit a creative project publicly. In short, I believe I could weave several of my past offerings together and create something long-term that has a bigger impact.

Another idea for a long-term group would be a year of coaching to fulfill short- and long-term goals that would culminate with a gathering of the clients somewhere. I have given retreats in Corsica and India, and they have been

successful. I am no stranger to organizing such journeys. In conclusion, I want to BUILD on what is already in my tool box.

Another coach-in-training, Ellen, explained:

I intend to build my email list. That's a top priority, because I understand how much business flows, and flows easily, from a big list. Smaller impact ways to do that would be to write blog posts for my website, start a Facebook page, get people in my existing network to like my page and get on my list, and have them share my page with the people they know. The bigger impact way is to do those things but to then reach out to a couple of particular people in my network who already have big followings and get them to mention me in their materials. Even bigger is to get to know MORE of those sorts of people, people who already have big lists and who might be interested in what I do, and cultivate them and then ask them to mention me. This is new territory for me but I know it's important ... and the right direction to be heading!

Many new coaches, and seasoned coaches too, have as their default way of thinking about what to offer a smaller-than-necessary way of conceptualizing their choices. This default way of thinking may have arisen because they were taught to think small in their family-of-origin, because some attempts at thinking bigger ended in failure, because of some lack of necessary entitlement, self-confidence, or chutzpah, or simply because the idea of thinking big never crossed their mind. Whatever the reasons, this default setting can completely derail a coaching practice.

Five people at the back of a church or forty participants online? Adding another blog post to your website and attracting seven views or writing for a mega-site and attracting thousands of views? Announcing your practice to the few hundred people you know or cultivating partners who announce your practice to their hundreds of thousands of subscribers? Which of these ways do you suppose leads to a great coaching practice ... and which don't?

7. Thinking Locally and Globally

The Internet allows you to attract coaching clients and an audience from all parts of the United States and all parts of the world. As a creativity coach specializing in working with actors, for example, there may not be enough actors for you to work with in your local town. But there are certainly enough actors to work with when and if your services become known to actors in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and London. Nor is there any problem in working with clients at a distance: you simply use email, the phone, Skype, Facetime, a conference call set-up (for groups) or something similar.

My clients are all over the world. I'm currently working with a singer in London, a painter in New Zealand, a performance artist in Brighton, England, a college professor in British Columbia, a Norwegian writer who lives some of the time in Norway and some of the time in Mexico, a Spanish writer who lives some of the time in Boston and some of the time in Spain, and so on. I have no trouble scheduling appointments—I probably have the various time zones in my bones by now and know that London is eight hours ahead of my Pacific time, Berlin is nine hours ahead, and so on. Of course, there are also apps and scheduling software that can take care of all of that but I still do my scheduling “by hand.”

On a typical client day, which might involve six half-hour Skype or phone sessions, not a single client is within a hundred miles of me and most are thousands of miles away. It is lovely to have this global reach and I hope you embrace the idea that your prospective territory is the whole world. There is such an upside to this way of working: no travel time for you or your clients; no office to rent or maintain; the ability to see each other (via Skype, Facetime, or something similar); lots of hot coffee or tea for each of you; and a simplicity and intimacy that makes “coaching at a distance” pretty much ideal.

It is also certainly possible to do excellent things locally and I recommend that you find ways to connect locally with individuals, groups and schools. I often talk to local writers' groups or sign books at local bookstores. For several years I taught an annual creativity coaching workshop at Sofia University, which is about an hour away from me. For a decade, I taught in the extended education division of St. Mary's College, about half-an-hour away from me. For many years I ran an annual five-day workshop at Ft. Mason Center in San Francisco, across the Bay from me.

And I saw individual clients in the back of a café in the Bernal Heights neighborhood of San Francisco. So, I certainly do include local activities and local events in my life and I recommend that you do so as well.

But almost all of the things I do now are done at a distance—for example, the seventy radio interviews I did from my desk over a two-month period recently in support of a new book, all the individual coaching I do, all the conversations I have with editors, agents, partners and other business contacts, almost all of the classes I teach and the workshops I run (I am on the road only five or six weeks out of the year running live classes, trainings, and workshops), and virtually everything else that makes up my coaching-and-writing life.

This conversation may be making you pine for the human contact of working face-to-face with clients or running classes or workshops with actual human beings in the room. If that is your preferred way of working, or if you believe that to be your preferred way of working, then you will want to find ways to do that—but I do suggest and recommend that you add on a global perspective, a global component, and global reach. The wide world is too beautiful and too valuable to ignore!

You might want to think about the following questions:

1. If you haven't done any phone coaching or Skype or Facetime coaching yet, do you feel ready to begin? If you do, describe how you might proceed.
2. Do you have a special connection with a certain part of the world—with actors in Chicago, dancers in Antwerp, women entrepreneurs in Dallas? If you have one or more such connections, how might you turn those connections into clients or workshops?
3. If you have some reservations about working globally, try to air those reservations—and work through them.
4. Create a plan for working globally or describe how you will incorporate the idea of working globally into your overall coaching plan.

Juliette, a coach-in-training, responded to this lesson in the following way:

The conversation about global reach is interesting to me. In our French community here in French Canada, the world seems less wide than in the English community, I think. Nonetheless, I like the idea of thinking globally. I already have a few people from France that follow my dancing videos and my free trainings online. So, why should it be different with coaching? I even think that it's going to be easier with the coaching, since for the dancing, at some point at least, you have to come into my studio!

I've already tested out phone sessions and Skype Video sessions with some clients. I loved it! I've also really enjoyed the email coaching sessions too. A lot! But not everyone is comfortable with writing and I observed that people seem to NEED to explain their story, so I think that as far as my global reach is concerned, I won't use email coaching exclusively with any clients but rather use it as an adjunct to phone or Skype Video coaching. I like this plan!

The first special connection I have is with a group of salsa dancers in Quebec, most of whom reside in Montreal. I also know a handful of my professional colleagues who live all over the world. I don't know if I can somehow link my coaching practice to those folks, but it's certainly worth thinking about! The second special connection I can see would be a group of Women Entrepreneurs in Europe. I don't know if they would have an interest in creativity coaching but since we do have to be creative in our business, they just might. I even thought about creating a small course especially for business people. This is getting me thinking!

Another coach-in-training, Greta, explained:

I absolutely want to work globally. This is an idea that has been stirring in the back of my mind for some time. I currently endorse a musical instrument company in Germany. Two years ago, they asked me to put together a workshop for their annual Bass Camp and Festival. Teaching bass is not really something I like doing, but teaching in general is a fun experience for me. The more I learn about creativity coaching, the more I think about the possibility of pitching a workshop idea to them for next year.

They are a highly respected, worldwide bass company and it would attract quite a bit of attention. I think this could be a really excellent way for me to start using my connections in a very effective way. I also thought about the possibility of putting something together for music conventions in Los Angeles and Nashville. I have

good connections to both of these. With regard to these music conventions, I know my audience very, very well. And I should really start thinking about how I am marketing myself to that crowd. I'm thinking about this right now as I write this at four in the morning. My mind is racing with possibilities!

Working locally makes great and perfect sense. However, working globally will quite likely make up the bulk of your business. There is great ease in working with clients at a distance. For example, yesterday a client of mine who lives in Los Angeles had to hurry off to Chicago. That would have caused us to have to cancel a face-to-face session; but with Skype, I had no idea she was in Chicago rather than in Los Angeles until she mentioned it. That is one of many examples of the beauty and ease of working globally. Your great coaching practice will probably prove to be some combination of both, of live things and online things, of local things and global things, with, I'm guessing, the bulk of them in the distance, online, and global categories.

8. Choosing Your Niche and Brand

As a coach, you might function as a generalist—for example, as a life coach who works with many sorts of clients and many sorts of issues. Or you might work as a specialist with a niche—for example, as a creativity coach who specializes in helping performers reduce their anxiety before auditioning. You might also function as both: for example, as a creativity coach who works with all sorts of creative and performing artists and other creatives but who also specializes in work with anxious performers, with mid-career painters, or with some other niche group.

In most professions, there are both generalists and specialists. One financial advisor might represent himself as able to provide you with information on a wide range of investment opportunities and another might specialize in municipal bonds. Municipal bonds are his niche. One doctor might be a general practitioner and another an eye surgeon. Eye surgery is her specialty. One trial lawyer might accept a wide variety of cases and another might work exclusively on asbestos claims cases. Asbestos claims are his niche and his specialty.

Then there's the matter of brands. A brand is different from a niche or a specialty. You create a brand by distinguishing yourself from others. You might go to a certain dress designer not just because she specializes in wedding dresses but because her wedding dresses have a certain look, feel, and cachet to them. She has a specialty, wedding dresses, but she also has a brand, say Martha's Vintage Wedding Dresses. Many folks may work in her niche, in the area of designing wedding dresses, but none provide exactly what she provides. She has distinguished herself from the many others who are working in her niche and has managed to create her brand.

Here are a few examples of the difference between a specialty or niche and a brand:

Specialty or niche: wedding dresses
Brand: Martha's Vintage Wedding Dresses

Specialty or niche: eye surgery
Brand: Dr. John's 30-Minute Painless Eye Surgery

Specialty or niche: cognitive therapy
Brand: Albert Ellis's Rational-Emotive Therapy

Specialty or niche: life coaching for lawyers
Brand: Mary Taylor's "Beat Lawyer Burn Out" Program

Specialty or niche: spiritual coaching for former Catholics
Brand: Bob Smith's Vatican Recovery Program

Specialty or niche: creativity coaching with celebrities
Brand: Jane Olsen, Coach to the Stars!

Specialty or niche: executive coaching with CEOs
Brand: Larry Grant's Fortune Five Hundred Coaching

Often generalists become specialists over time and begin to cultivate a niche or perhaps a few niches. Conversely, sometimes specialists start out in a niche and become generalists, either because they discover that they like working with many sorts of client issues or because their brand demands that they move away from their initial niche. The headline is that it is not better or worse to be one or the other, a generalist or a specialist, and that each way of working comes with its pluses and minuses.

A generalist has a larger client pool but a specialist can effectively focus her marketing and promoting efforts. A generalist may stay fresh by working with many sorts of clients and client issues but a specialist may learn her clients' issues and challenges in greater depth and enjoy that deep work. It may strike you that a great way to work is as a generalist who also creates a niche or a few niches, as in that way you might reap the benefits of both ways of working. Indeed, that's quite likely to happen.

Whether you decide to become a generalist, a specialist, or a generalist with specialties, you will benefit greatly from building brand recognition and becoming a known entity. There is a huge difference between being a generic therapist and being Dr. Phil, a huge difference between specializing in Southwestern cuisine and being Bobby Flay, a huge difference between presenting New Age ideas and being Deepak Chopra. Whether your brand is "you" or whether it is something you

create (for example, gestalt therapy, logotherapy, psychoanalysis, or positive psychology, the brainchildren, respectively, of Fritz Perls, Viktor Frankl, Sigmund Freud, and Martin Seligman), creating a brand that becomes well-known is a key to your great coaching practice.

Take some time now and ponder the following questions:

- + Do you think you're more inclined to specialize or to work as a generalist?
- + Can you see a way of perhaps doing both? How might that look?
- + Do you see the value in becoming a brand? Does that seem like a congenial idea, a disconcerting idea, or a mix of pluses and minuses?
- + Do you already have some ideas for niches and specialties?
- + Do you already have some ideas about how to create your brand or brands?

Here's how one coach-in-training, Lynda, speculated about these issues:

I've decided that I'm going big. I'm going for "all creative folks." I am doing this because I really would like to work with a large range of creative types. I am interested in writers, artists, performers, musicians, and people who think they are not creative but are curious whether they might be creative. Also, I have experience with academic coaching and career coaching and I want to be able to use these skills if needed.

I have considered coaching just writers, because this is the area I have the most experience with, and the area where I've struggled personally. However, I would like to finish my book (based on my dissertation) before I carve out a niche as a specialist in working with writers. I want some writing accomplishments behind me first. I also feel like I might miss out on all those cool artists, musicians and such if I were to specialize in writers.

I don't love my name as my brand, but I have not yet come up with a moniker or clever motto to use instead. I am going to continue to think on this. For now, my website and my brand are under my name, as a kind of business card for my academic work. I have considered being a consultant as well as a coach, so my

name may be appropriate as a brand in that context. However, my name is not great as a brand because my first name is often misspelled and my last name is totally mundane. More to think about here!

You may well have trouble landing on your niche and your brand. This is normal. In my experience, and unless you get unusually lucky, it takes a lot of tries to land on just the right way to brand yourself and describe your niche in such a way that folks really get it and really want it. I was lucky that “creativity coaching” came to me early on and worked as both a niche and a brand; in my work with meaning, it is has proven much harder to find the right brand and I haven’t found it yet.

So, try not to get upset or discouraged if it takes you many tries and many real-world adventures (and maybe missteps and failures) before you land on the language that really supports what you are attempting to do. This is genuine process, after all, and only occasionally do the right concepts, words and phrases come to us the first time we think about them. Often, we have to cycle through a great many attempts before landing in the right place. We may get lucky and land right on it; but more likely the process is going to prove hit and miss.

One excellent way to help yourself arrive at your niche and/or brand is to browse the Internet and see how other coaches are describing, positioning, and branding themselves. A second excellent way is to take a look at the websites or catalogues of the large workshop centers where presenters of all sorts, coaches among them, lead their workshops and retreats. These centers include the Omega Institute, the Kripalu Yoga and Retreat Center, the Esalen Institute, and 1440 Multiversity in the United States; and Hollyhock in Canada.

Once you land on a niche and/or a brand and have found the language to describe them, pass your ideas and your language past several of your friends and colleagues to see what they think. Your main questions are “Is this clear?”, “Is this strong?” and “Is this compelling?” Clear is not enough: strong and compelling are also needed. After all, your business rises or falls on whether or not folks are drawn to your services and to the way you’ve branded yourself. Check out your ideas, and the exact way that you’re naming and describing your ideas, with a number of friends and colleagues. If they give you a real thumb’s up, you will have taken a significant leap forward!

9. Crafting Pitches for Your Marketing and Promoting Efforts

Let me repeat a few of our headlines. A coaching practice that works well, that brings in a good income, and that holds your interest because of its diversity, will likely be made up of many sorts of activities, only one of which will be one-to-one coaching. These other activities will include running classes, workshops, retreats and trainings, creating products for sale like books, ebooks, and programs, lecturing and otherwise talking for pay, involving yourself in collaborations and partnerships with others, and more.

For each of these activities, you will need to use language well in order to sell it. You will need to describe your coaching practice well, you will need to build your brand via the language you use, you will need to sell each new class, workshop, retreat and training by using language that attracts participants, and so on. You may have a great class to offer and you may nevertheless attract far fewer participants than you otherwise might because your write-up isn't compelling, because you aren't offering "standard" sales inducements that are proven to work (like an early bird price), or both.

These are two separate but related ideas: compelling language and standard sales gimmicks. When you use language like "time is running out" and "only three more spots remain" and "get a free session for signing up for my platinum package" and "the breakthrough techniques you'll learn in this workshop will immediately help you to x, y, and z," that means that you have embraced the reality that you are involved in sales and that you are willing to use sales tactics that have proven to work. Like getting over the psychological hurdle of genuinely wanting clients, this is another psychological hurdle that many coaches must get over (and that many never do): admitting that they are selling things and internally agreeing to use sale tactics that they may feel, either consciously or just out of conscious awareness, are irritating, unworthy, tacky, or beneath them.

Sometimes stubborn pride gets in the way as well: "I shouldn't have to do these silly sales things because what I'm offering is of such a high quality that people should flock to it because of its quality, not because I'm offering a fire sale or some two-for-one gimmick!" It's important that you loosen up that stubborn pride by reminding yourself that your products and services *are* good but that for

people to experience them, they must be helped on board. Even Harvard and Stanford, when they pitch to alumni, pitch. They make as compelling a case as they can, they offer special inducements (like getting one's name on a building), and they fully understand that they are selling. If Harvard and Stanford can pitch, you can too!

Why don't you try your hand at this? For practice, why don't you try creating three sorts of pitches? The first is a "do you have a problem?" pitch. The second is an "I have openings" pitch. The third is a "special deal right now" pitch. Here are brief examples of each (yours can be exactly this brief or considerably longer, your choice):

1. "Are you have trouble sleeping at night? Sleep coaching can help! Drop me a line at and let's chat!"
2. "I have only two openings left in my Good Night Sleep Coaching Program for restless sleepers. Contact me now!"
3. "Get five sessions for the price of four! Get a better night's sleep this year with sleep coaching. This offer runs out February 1st. Contact me right now!"

Give this a try. Create three practice pitches right now, without a lot of hesitation or resistance. Then, if you feel like it, think through how and where you might use these pitches.

Let's dream up a hypothetical service: Finding Your True Voice as a Singer Coaching. Here are what some pitches for that service might look like:

Pitch to a top online magazine for singers:

"Dear X, I'd love to become a guest contributor to your site. I have a series of excellent pieces on how singers can find their true singing voice. Care to see a sample?" (If and when someone bites, you would sit down and quickly produce a sample or two.)

Pitch to the "right person" at a local music conservatory:

“Dear X, I have a really useful workshop for singers that helps them find their genuine singing voice. Would you like to learn more?” (If and when someone bites, you would quickly create something to say about your not-yet-existing workshop.)

Pitch to a popular blog for singers:

“Dear X, I have some really useful advice for singers about how they can find their genuine singing voice. I’d love it if you’d interview me on this important subject. I’m happy to provide you with some sample questions to which you can add your own questions. Interested?” (If and when someone bites, you would quickly create those questions.)

Get the idea? You can, by manifesting just a little chutzpah, get folks interested in what you have to offer even before you’ve actually created the offering. We’ll chat about this again when we look at the matter of the timing of your efforts. For now, keep this headline in mind: you can have something you may really want, like a gig as a blogger on a prestigious website, simply by asking. Only when some interest is expressed will you need to produce something!

Let’s look at that exclamation point at the end of the last sentence. Many new coaches, and many experienced coaches as well, do not like to use exclamatory language or exclamation points. They find them tacky or even obnoxious. Take a look at the following pairs of sentences, the first without an exclamation point, the second with, and begin to feel through what relationship you might want to develop with the “dreaded” exclamation point of sales.

- + Come see me in person at the XYZ Wellness Fair.
- + Come see me in person at the XYZ Wellness Fair!

- + I have two openings remaining in my coaching practice.
- + I have two openings remaining in my coaching practice!

- + My new Top Ten Tips ebook appears on Wednesday.
- + My new Top Ten Tips ebook appears on Wednesday!

- + The early bird price on my Paris workshop runs out December 1st.
- + The early bird price on my Paris workshop runs out December 1st!

- + My new blogpost just went up. Come take a look.
- + My new blogpost just went up. Come take a look!

- + Do you have a fear of flying? I can help.
- + Do you have a fear of flying? I can help!

- + I also offer a completely free fifteen-minute consultation.
- + I also offer a completely free fifteen-minute consultation!

- + Come work with me now.
- + Come work with me now!

Flaubert was legendary for spending the day putting a comma in, taking that comma out, putting that comma back in, and so on. I do not spend that much time on the following but I do often sit there putting an exclamation point in, taking that exclamation point out, putting that exclamation point back in, and so on. Part of me does not want to put it in and part of me understands the value of putting it in. You will have to work this out for yourself and, like me, you may never work it out to your complete satisfaction. But I do suggest that you at least give exclamation points a try. Or rather, I do suggest that you at least give exclamation points a try!

Your greatest tool in marketing and promoting your coaching practice is the language you use. Your language needs to interest prospective customers but it also needs to move them to take action. You need, to use car sales lingo, to be a closer. If you have a store on your website (and we will talk about that), then you want folks to make it all the way from landing on your website, through perusing your offerings, to actually purchasing a coaching package, a downloadable program, or a series of ebooks from you.

Garnering a ton of website visitors or a gazillion friends on Facebook is not the end of the story (though those are excellent and important things!). You must “convert” some number of those folks into customers. This you do by creating products and services that are wanted, by using standard sales tactics in pitching those products and services, and by using language in as compelling a fashion as possible in the pitches you produce. Even things that sell themselves, like the newest Star Wars movie or the newest iPhone, come with advertising campaigns

and carefully honed pitches. What you are offering does not sell itself: you must sell it.

10. Creating Coaching Packages

Each profession operates in its own way and has its own “customs of the trade.” Real estate agents take a percentage of the sale rather than an hourly rate or a package price. Your dentist charges by the visit but may also provide a package price for a certain product, like braces or dentures. Lawyers get a retainer and charge by the quarter hour. The fares on some taxi trips are unset, say for crossing town, while others may be set, say for getting out to the airport. Literary agents charge 15% on domestic sales and an additional 10% if foreign agents are involved. One restaurant may be a la carte, another may have a prix fix menu, and a third may have both.

As we experience life, we learn about these differences and we grow accustomed to these differences. We don’t expect the real estate agents we interview to accept an hourly rate or a package price, we don’t expect a fixed prix restaurant to offer us just a hamburger, and we don’t expect our taxi driver to quote us a fixed price for our cross-town trip. The same is true with coaching. It too has its style and its customs of the trade.

Basically, you can expect to encounter one or another of three sorts of offerings when you approach a coach: an hourly rate for sessions (or, if his or her sessions are of a different duration, a 45-minute rate, a half-hour rate, etc.), a package rate (for example, a set rate for three months of phone or skype coaching with email coaching included), and a program rate (for example, a rate for a year-long “Get Your Novel Written” program of individual sessions, groups sessions, and other related services).

The logic of a single-session rate speaks for itself. You charge a given amount for a single session lasting for a certain amount of time: for example, \$150 for an hour-long phone or Skype session. This is the exact equivalent of paying a set price for a forty-five-minute massage or a fifty-minute therapy session. The advantages of providing coaching based on this model are that prospective clients have no long-term or expensive commitments to worry about, they are clear on what they are getting (and what they are not getting, like, for example, additional email coaching), and are accustomed to purchasing single sessions of things. With the single session model, there’s no psychological stretch needed on the part of clients.

The downside, and it is a significant downside, is that clients are likely to come and go much more quickly than if you have a package or program in place. If you use the single-session model, some clients will continue with you for months and even years but many will stop after that single session. They may stop because they got exactly what they needed, because it got them too close to their issues and challenges, because they didn't find it a fit, a match, or particularly useful—or because the single-session model itself inclined them to think that a single session might prove sufficient. Whatever the reason, if clients are provided with only a single-session model, many will not return after that single session.

That's where packages come in. (We'll chat about programs in a future lesson.) Many coaches provide a package of services or multiple packages of services. For instance, a given coach might offer a monthly package comprised of two bi-weekly phone sessions with email contact in between, all for a set price. That same coach might also offer three more expensive packages, one comprised of four weekly phone sessions and email contact in between, another comprised of four weekly phone sessions, email contact in between, and also brief phone contact in between, and a last comprised of four weekly sessions, email contact in between, brief phone contact in between, and membership in an ongoing support group. Each of these four would be progressively more expensive.

Let's say that you're a creativity coach with a general practice and also with specialties in performance anxiety, the audition process, and helping writers prepare their nonfiction book proposals. Here are the kinds of packages you might offer:

+ A three-month package of bi-weekly phone or Skype sessions. Your language for this might be: "We'll meet every two weeks via phone or Skype and I ask for an initial three-month commitment."

+ A monthly package that includes two phone or Skype sessions and email coaching in between sessions. Your language for this might be: "We'll chat twice during the month by phone or Skype and between sessions we'll continue the work via email."

+ A six-month "great auditions" package that includes weekly coaching sessions, handouts on managing performance anxiety and auditioning with strength, and

brief rehearsal-and-reminder chats right before client auditions. Your language for this might be: “For the next six months, we’ll work together on every aspect of your performance life, focusing especially on managing performance anxiety and auditioning powerfully.”

+ A three-month “Get Your Nonfiction Book Proposal Written!” package that includes bi-weekly coaching sessions, nonfiction book proposal handouts, email coaching, and the review of a draft and a final version of the client’s nonfiction book proposal. Your language for this might be: “Over the next three months, get your nonfiction book proposal in great shape and ready for submission! I’ll coach you through all the challenges of the process and review your proposal as well.”

There are an infinite variety of packages you might create, some of which are organized around time (e.g., asking for client commitment for a certain number of sessions or offering a deal on a certain number of sessions), some organized around multiple services (e.g., phone or Skype coaching, email coaching and group support), some organized around a specialty of yours (like audition prep), and so on. There is no single “right” or “best” package but rather the reasonable choices that you make and that you then try out in the marketplace.

The process of creating a package involves deciding what you want to offer and then attaching a price to that package. You’ll want to consider questions like how many times a month you want to work with clients (e.g., every week, twice a month, monthly, etc.), how much email availability (if any) you want to provide, whether you want to add on other skills and services (like reading and commenting on nonfiction book proposals), etc. All of this requires your thoughtful consideration.

Here’s how one coach-in-training, Olivia, considered the matter:

I'm still at the point where I am not charging. But I just took a look at the number of hours I've done for free and I see that I've met all my certification requirements. I realize that at some point I need to get over my fear of charging money, especially if I'm going to try to convince others to do the same! I had a client the other day who was concerned about charging for his photography... and I remember thinking... this is me. So yeah. It is time.

Here are my initial package ideas. I know the fees are low but I guess they seem like as much as I feel comfortable charging to begin with. Ah, well.

\$45 for 45 minutes. (single session)

\$85 for 2 sessions (bi-weekly sessions)

\$165 for 4 sessions (weekly sessions)

I just wrapped up with a few free clients and I'm continuing to coach a few others. I've coached about fourteen clients over the last couple of months and I think I will pitch to them first via email. After that, I'll start to pitch to my Facebook contacts. I think that seems like a reasonable place to start. I would like to eventually charge about twice that much and create more elaborate packages, but I won't be fully certified for another few months and I'm still very much in the learning process. I think that my goal is to charge about twice that much six to eight months down the road even more after I have some years of experience.

Olivia is obviously just beginning to think about packages. You may be at exactly the same place. Just step back a bit, brainstorm various options and various packages, then make what will of course amount to only a tentative decision. Sit with that decision for a while—maybe a weekend or a week—and see if what you're intending to offer still seems right and appropriate. If it doesn't, tweak your choice or else make a new choice. Over time, I believe you'll see the great value in creating and offering packages. Get your feet wet now and see how it goes!

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11. Finding and Pitching Partners

A “partner” is someone with the wherewithal to be of service to you and the inclination to take an interest in you. All of the following are “prospective partners.”

+ It might be an individual at your local university who can help you. This might be the person who coordinates extended education classes, the head of a department, the chair of a school within the university, or a faculty member who knows how to get things done. This person might sponsor your workshops or classes or pave the way for you to appear for a talk. How might you pitch such a person?

+ It might be an individual with a “big list” who is willing to announce your practice, announce your products, announce your classes and workshops, and so on. Anybody with a list of a few thousand is a valuable partner—and the bigger the list and the more that they want to actively announce you and support you, the better. How might you pitch such a person? What favor might you ask for, what offer might you make, or what might you otherwise do to interest such a person?

+ It might be an individual at a well-known establishment such as a popular retreat center, yoga center, school, online school, etc., who would advocate for your class or your workshop and/or help you bring your class, workshop, retreat or training to that location. Think through how you might find such a person and what your pitch might be to such a person.

+ It might be someone who is a “natural feeder” of clients: a well-known music teacher who might send you anxious students for some anxiety management coaching, a gerontologist with a thriving practice who might refer you “second half of life” clients looking for meaning and purpose, a gallery owner with a large stable of painters who might refer artists to your “business of art” coaching practice, and so on. Think through how you might find such a person and how you might pitch such a person.

+ It might be an “opinion maker,” someone with a large audience, for example a well-known blogger or columnist whose opinion counts—someone who can

announce your ideas, your practice, your products, etc., to a large audience. Think through how you might find such a person and how you might pitch such a person.

Think through the idea of partners. These aren't collaborators (they don't co-write our books or co-teach our classes), business partners (in the sense of having a contractual relationship with us), or confederates (those folks with whom we are actually close) but rather folks in the wide world who have some reach, some clout, or can be of some benefit to us. These are folks who decide to help us a bit because they like what they see, out of the goodness of their heart, or because we have something to offer them in return (like an affiliate product or a return favor).

Who might some partners be for you? Give this some thought!

At some point, you must pitch your prospective partners and the other marketplace players who might prove valuable to you. This pitching may of course make you very anxious. You may feel like an imposter, not ready, one down, not in a position to reciprocate, and so on. You will need to deal with this anxiety, manage it, and not let it stop you from doing what you need to do. Pitch your prospective partners even if you are feeling anxious! They aren't saber-toothed tigers—they only feel that way to you!

Some of this anxiety can be ameliorated by good internal preparation. For example, it is wonderful to already know the “weak points,” “red flags” or “natural difficulties” associated with the thing we are pitching and to have some prepared responses ready. If, to take an example from the world of writing, the novel you have written is shorter than novels in your genre typically are, you should have some examples in mind of published novels that are your length and that have done very well in the marketplace. If you are pitching a workshop that you have never run before, you should be able to say why it will work even though you have no track record on this workshop to prove that it will work. Getting these strong talking points prepared can help allay some of your anxiety.

Your anxiety may be high because these interactions do in fact matter to you. These pitches aren't just friendly interactions, after all; they are business interactions that may make the difference between your business growing or not growing. You are asking for help “out of the blue” and you may well have nothing

in particular to offer them in return. Given what may feel to you like the awkwardness or even embarrassing nature of this sort of transaction, remind yourself that you are obliged to advocate for yourself, your services, and your products even if they aren't perfected yet or as wonderful as you would like them to be. They must be advocated for now; waiting until they are "perfect" is a terrible policy.

Come from the confident place of believing that what you have to offer is of value and ought to be better known. Remember that you *can* just ask for help without having anything to provide in return. It is a perfectly sensible idea to "depend on the kindness of strangers" a bit, especially as you begin, because many people actually like to help! It may surprise you to find that folks will announce your services just because you asked them to. What do you do then? You say "thank you" and remember them, so that when you do have something to offer them you make them that offer.

Here's how one coach-in-training, Gabriella, approached the matter of partners:

At first, I felt totally flummoxed thinking about partners – who on earth could I approach? Then I realized that there are two wonderful teachers I'm currently training with in the area of working with dreams. They have repeatedly mentioned to me an interest in collaborating with me and combining something around dreaming and creativity coaching. This is exactly where I want to go, but I can't quite see it yet, so I've dithered with them so far. But it is an opportunity waiting for me! These teachers are much sought after and have big lists and a huge client base already happening, so they are definitely in the realm of bringing something tangible to the table. I just need to dream that something up!

A second coach-in-training, Barbara, explained:

As I thought about the matter of partners, I noticed that I have more prospective partners than I thought – people I know and already have some connection with. And I think that already having a connection is somehow important and helpful. For each of the different categories of prospective partners, I found a couple of people I know, and this made me smile. Gosh, who would have thought that I know so many like-minded people! Discovering this made me more confident and gives me strength for the efforts that I know I need to undertake.

It is good to have this list of potential partners in front of me now. I know that I can even add more people. The next step is to reconnect with these old connections. I need to think through the best way to connect with them, whether to drop them an email, drop them an actual letter, or call them on the phone. Plus, I need to create a good pitch for this purpose. My new goal is to contact one of these people every day, starting with the ones who are easiest for me to contact, and in the process to learn what in my pitch resonates with people and what doesn't. I want to begin doing the small, slow steps that I like to do and invite my brain to find even more people!

You need the help of others in order to build your great coaching practice. This might not be the case if you were already very well-known, very visible, possessed a huge list, and so on. But even folks in that enviable possession still reach out to other people in order to broaden their reach and build their business. Even if you become very successful, you will still want to reach out to new partners—in part because it is exciting to do so! Begin this process of identifying and approaching partners as soon as you can.

12. Running Classes and Workshops and Writing Books

I'm connecting what at first glance might seem like two disparate subjects, running classes and workshops and writing books, because it can pay great dividends to think of them together. When you begin creating your class or workshop you might at the same time begin to build a related book. For example, a twelve-week class or a weekend workshop consisting of twelve hours of instruction is already a thing divided into twelve parts—and twelve chapters is a nice number of chapters for a nonfiction book. It's really pretty straightforward and sensible to create your class or workshop and build your book at the same time.

In keeping with this idea, you might construct your class assignments in such a way that participant responses become examples that you make use of in the book (naturally, with participants' permission). You might make sure that every class or workshop hour is named in a consistent way, so that you end up with a table of contents for your book. Or you might start with the table of contents for your book and then design your class or workshop around that table of contents. Likewise, you might think through what each book chapter might contain and then design your class or workshop with those contents in mind. In short, you might think strategically about the relationship between the classes and workshops you offer and the books you write right from the beginning of the process.

Whether or not you connect these ideas up from the beginning, you will want to make classes and workshops (and retreats, if they interest you) mainstays of your great coaching practice. Of course, each step of the process will require choosing: choosing whether to run this class or that class, choosing whether to run it live or online, deciding on whether to charge a little, so as to perhaps attract more folks, or a lot, so as to make more money, and so on. Because of all of that necessary choosing and its attendant anxiety, you may not want to get started. Watch out for that! Don't get deterred by the prospect and the reality of all that choosing.

One logical place to start is by choosing your idea. What will your workshop, class or retreat be about? To get started, try your hand at answering the following four questions.

1. Have you harbored the desire to run a particular workshop, class or retreat? Is that desire still strong in you or has it perhaps waned?
2. What criteria do you think you might want to use in choosing your idea? That the subject is attractive to participants? That the material is familiar to you? That the material seems like it might be easy to deliver? Or?
3. Have you ever taken a workshop or class that you particularly loved? Is there something to take away from that experience to help you decide on your idea?
4. Have you ever taken a workshop or class that you particularly disliked? Is there something to take away from that experience to help you decide on your idea?

Running a class or workshop may prove easier than you might think. Your task isn't to pile on material, prove that you're an expert in something, or provide participants with a "comprehensive" experience. It's to actually help them learn something or experience something. Giving them a simple exercise that provokes them, having them spend half an hour writing on that exercise, and then allowing them to share with the group or with each other will almost certainly prove a richer experience than you talking for an hour and making twenty impossible-to-remember points. And that's easier on you!

You might aim for a particular mix of the didactic and the experiential that minimizes the didactic and emphasizes the experiential: say, ten minutes of lecturing followed by fifty minutes of something experiential per workshop hour. So, for a four-hour (half-day) workshop, that would mean that you only have to prepare about forty minutes of talking—which is not nothing but which is also not four hours of performing! Don't think that presenting a workshop or class means "I have to perform all the time." It doesn't mean that at all!

Once you pick a specific class, workshop or retreat to run, what follows next? Well, everything. Among other things, you will need to:

- + Settle on a venue (home studio, rental space, cyber class, etc.)
- + Research venues (if you need a rental space)
- + Pick a price (if you are running the event yourself)

- + Pick dates
- + Create an effective description of the event
- + Create a website presence for the event (a page on your site where you announce the event or a whole website devoted to the event)
- + Create a marketing and promoting plan (who you'll contact, where you'll announce, what free advertising you'll try for, what paid advertising you'll splurge on, etc.)
- + Execute that plan (actually contact all those people, actually make all those announcements, actually go after that free publicity, actually plunk down money for that paid advertising, and so on)

Naturally, this will feel daunting. It makes you a busy entrepreneur, a detail person, a salesperson, a person who wears many hats. It's unlikely that there will be anyone to hand all this over to: only you can perform many (or most) of these tasks, even if you've hired an assistant or a virtual assistant. Accept this reality. There are many moving parts to this adventure and you are in charge of all of them. Breathe, smile, and tackle them!

Some aspects of your plan may strike you as easy—and some may strike you as hard. When you come up against one of those hard places you are likely to stall, avoid doing the work, and have your class, workshop or retreat fall through. It would be lovely if everything about the process felt easy but you can bet that not everything will. Get ready for that!

You'll know that something is feeling hard by virtue of the fact that you aren't getting it done. You'll find yourself procrastinating, feeling a lot of anxiety, and maybe feeling disappointed with yourself or upset with someone else, like the representative of a venue who hasn't gotten back to you or the friend with whom you thought you might co-lead the class. Procrastination is the bright red flag that something is feeling difficult and making you anxious. Don't procrastinate this practice-building opportunity away!

This means that you will need to stretch. Stretching often involves nothing more than managing your anxiety level. Try to remember to say something like the following to yourself, “Wow, having to choose among these three workshop ideas is really making me anxious. I have to breathe, calm my nerves, settle down, and make a choice. Okay, it’s just a case of nerves! Let me face this right now.” If getting to run the class, workshop or retreat that you would really love to run requires that you do a little stretching, embrace that reality—and do that stretching.

Then follow through. Following through means all of the following (and more):

- + Making to-do lists and getting items checked off your to-do lists

- + Repeating things: announcing your workshop to your Twitter followers many times, sending a repeat email to a venue coordinator who hasn’t gotten back to you, again asking someone with a large list to announce your workshop, etc. We would prefer to do things only once but life isn’t like that.

- + Changing your plans “effortlessly” if they must be changed. If you learn that there are hidden costs to the venue you had hoped to use and that therefore you had better find a different venue, then rather than getting annoyed, upset, disappointed, frazzled, belligerent, or anything of the sort, find a different venue.

- + Checking in with prospective participants who have indicated that they “might” like to come. Just as you will want to create a system for communicating with paid participants, create a system for checking back with the “maybes” on your list.

To help you follow through, try your hand at answering the following pair of questions.

1. What in my personality might keep me from following through? What can I do to “upgrade” my personality so that I don’t sabotage my own efforts?

2. What practical circumstances (like day job pressures, family responsibilities, etc.) might get in the way of me following through? What can I do to make sure that those circumstances don’t derail my efforts?

A time will come when you will have to deal with your anxiety, screw up your courage, lay your fears and doubts to rest, and show up for your class, workshop, or retreat. Come early, come prepared, smile, and enjoy your role as leader, facilitator, and learner. Your goal is to provide participants with a useful experience, which may mean sticking to your plan or improvising, lecturing or listening, holding tight to the reins or allowing for spontaneous interaction. Here you go!

Running your workshop, class or retreat is both real work and great fun. Treat it like the work it is—but remember to relax and to smile! And, if the idea makes sense to you, try to connect your workshop or class with a book that you build at the same time. Wouldn't it be nice to end up with a successful workshop that you can repeat and a book proposal that you can submit to agents and editors? Isn't that a lovely prospect?

13. Speaking in the World

By “speaking in the world” I mean getting up before an audience, getting in front of a radio microphone, getting in front of a television camera, or getting on the phone to do an interview. You will be much more successful in your practice if you make public appearances and speak in the world. This aspect of practice-building may not appeal to you or may even scare you quite a bit. The world-wide number one phobia is public speaking and you, too, may have a phobic dread of public speaking. But I hope that you can overcome that fear, because public speaking is a vital part of your great coaching practice.

It’s important that you remember that you will get much better at public speaking the more you do it, especially when you speak about those topics that you’ve spoken about many times before. Over time, you will “own” certain little mini-speeches, you will only have to “run those tapes,” and you’re likely to sound downright eloquent—just the way that an average politician can sound eloquent delivering his stump speech because he has repeated it so many times. Practice and repetition are the keys here—you *will* get better the more you do it!

Speaking engagements differ dramatically as to what is required from you. Picture in your mind’s eye the difference between “speaking on your subject” for two minutes, for five minutes, for fifteen minutes, for half an hour, and for a full hour. Feel through “how much more” is required in each instance and what that “more” might be: another tip, another anecdote, another example, or what? Remember, you don’t have to begin with an hour-long presentation! Might a two-minute presentation be within reach?

Picture the difference between spontaneously standing up at a meeting and pitching your practice versus pitching your practice at the end of a speech you give. Picture the difference between presenting a slide presentation versus reading a speech versus speaking extemporaneously. Picture the difference between doing an interview while sitting at your desk in your home office versus doing an interview at a radio station. All of these are real differences and you can choose which of these are most congenial or easiest on you and stick with those at the start of your coaching career.

We are often most nervous before we speak and also for the first minute or two as we speak. This often happens because for those “first minutes” (it’s really usually only a minute or two) we aren’t “running our tape yet” – as soon as we do “run our tape,” we tend to completely relax. What most people don’t realize is that successful speakers are successful in large part because they have said the same thing many times over already and now are just “running a tape.” They know how to sound eloquent, relaxed and confident because this is the tenth or hundredth time they have said the same thing!

This truth suggests all of the following: that you will want to get on with your first tries at things, no matter how they go, so that you will get better at them; that you will want to “repeat” yourself, that is, run the same workshop or give the same talk many times over, so that you can acquire the benefit of “owning a tape”; and that after a while you will probably bore yourself with your own tapes and will therefore want to present new things ... with new attendant anxiety!

You might begin your speaking career by using slide presentations and other aids, especially when you are presenting something new for the first few times. You recognize that the material is new to you, you recognize that the audience is perhaps a little intimidating, you recognize that you have too many things on your plate to do this presentation justice if you tried to memorize it or just “speak” it, so you create a slide show – and do a beautiful job of presenting!

In my own case, I speak extemporaneously about the subjects that I’ve spoken about many times before and, for example, can deliver my hour-long “12 Secrets of Personal Creativity” lecture cold, at the drop of a hat, and without hesitation. But if I’m speaking on a new subject or on a subject that I’m intending to present only a few times, I’ll create a slide presentation and use that to guide my chat. Being flexible and strategic in this way will allow you to do many more things than you might otherwise do. For some things—those subjects that you know really well and have spoken about before—you might just get up and speak; for others, use all the aids at your disposal!

Here’s how Martha, a coach-in-training, considered these matters:

I have been considering speaking in the world for some time—and avoiding it. I speak in public to do meditation programs and I’ve taught art classes and still I have fear of speaking in public. Realizing that this is just a bit ridiculous at my age,

I have now contacted Toastmasters to start to learn how to speak in public with more skill and ease. Actually, there is a lot I would like to say to people but my shyness has always given me the excuse that 'I express myself through my art,' which is true but which is also a way of avoiding speaking more directly and to various audiences. In reality that avoidance is not all right, because I really do enjoy people and would like to be able to confidently communicate with them much more often.

A second coach-in-training, Maryanne, came at the issue from a very different place. She explained:

I just love speaking in front of people, being on stage, and having everybody's eyes fixed on me. I enjoy the feeling of being the center of attention. Just imagine, a whole crowd of people there sitting in front of me and I get to capture their attention for the time that has been allotted me. I've done that lots of times: I've been active on stage as an amateur actress and dancer and I've given demonstrations on embroidery in front of 200 people. I've given talks at conferences in different languages—in French, Swedish, Spanish, and English—and even though I'm not a native speaker of all these languages, I still enjoy speaking in public tremendously.

But I do have some fears, primarily around singing and playing an instrument. So, I've decided to overcome those fears by opening a YouTube channel and producing videos that include some singing and some accordion playing as a marketing tool to promote my coaching practice. And now I can already feel that I'm getting nervous about that! But speaking in public is something that thrills me completely. I think I'm very good at it, and every time I do it I can feel the energy flowing from me to the audience and bouncing back. I love that!

I have also decided to offer talks on different topics, always with a connection to holistic health and creativity coaching. As I'm active in many associations, I'll contact them and offer them talks on any topic that might be of interest to their membership. I'll leave the topics open, so I can be more flexible in case the associations have specific requirements. I'm also convinced that they'll be eager to get more information about holistic health and creativity coaching and I'm excited to speak on those topics. My idea would be to film my talks and put them on YouTube as well. I need to think about that, since it's important to have the right equipment for that in order to make a good recording. But I think it sounds like a

great idea!

You may not feel all that comfortable speaking in public ... yet. You may even dread it ... for now. But I hope that you'll harbor the hope that one day you'll enjoy public speaking, accomplish it with ease, and feel proud that you overcame your stage fright (or performed despite it). It is much harder to have the great coaching practice you want if you don't stand up and announce the existence of your practice, present talks, lead workshops, and teach classes, actively seek out interview opportunities and accept those opportunities, and otherwise speak in public. Begin by getting comfortable describing your coaching practice to yourself, out loud, in front of the mirror. Take that first step. Who knows where that might lead!

14. Designing Your Website

Of course, you must have a website. Virtually every business on earth now requires a website. But almost anything I might try to write about websites would be old news the moment I finished writing it. Therefore, in this lesson I'd like to try to present some ideas about websites that may be able to stand the test of time.

For answers to other sorts of questions, about whether you can build your website yourself or whether you need a web designer, about which service providers, systems, shopping cart technologies, newsletter providers, free plug-ins, etc., might serve you the best, and so on, you'll need to search out the most current information. That all changes too quickly and too dramatically for any answers that I might try to provide to prove current or viable.

Here are some ideas and issues that I think stand the test of time:

+ Should your website present “all of you” or just your coaching services?

There is no single answer or really good answer to this question. I suspect that most coaches try the following: they try to design and maintain multiple websites, one for each of their identities—one for them as a painter, one for them as a therapist, and one for them as a coach, etc.—and over time find it too hard to maintain all of those websites, and so come around to putting “everything they are” under one umbrella. On the other hand, many folks do maintain separate websites, keeping one for their fiction writing, one for their annual Bali retreat, another for their coaching work, and so on. As I say, there is no single answer or right answer, but I would suggest that if you think it feasible to get everything under one umbrella—which most likely would be your name dot com—then do so, because it *is* difficult to maintain multiple sites, especially given how hard it is to maintain website security nowadays.

+ Should you maintain a blog on your website?

Most coaches believe that they ought to maintain a personal blog, both as a means of expressing themselves and as a way to build their brand. And some personal blogs become very successful. But I think that on balance it is much more useful for you to try to land a gig as a blogger on a well-trafficked website than to

try to build a blog on your own website. My blog for *Psychology Today* has more than a million views and I don't think I could have garnered that sort of number from a personal blog. Indeed, it is far easier than you might think to land a gig as a blogger on a big site, because all those large entities need content and are looking for content. Again, there is no single answer or right answer and if you want to create and maintain a blog on your website, by all means do so. But do consider my suggestion about first trying to land a bigger gig, as that bigger gig may have far greater positive impact on your coaching practice.

+ Should you use a lot of words or few words in describing your offerings?

On balance, I think it is wise to operate on the principle that “less is more” when it comes to your website copy. I think that websites that are heavy on words do a relatively poorer job of converting visitors to customers than do websites that are briefer, tighter, and clearer. If you do want to say a lot about something, say about your philosophy as a coach, about your background, about the particulars of a service, and so on, have that information somewhere other than on your front page, home page or main landing page. Keep that front page as clean and simple as you can, with a clear email capture, a clear offer, a clear call to action, and just enough words to explain and intrigue without forcing a visitor to squint or do a lot of scrolling down. Doing less rather more can prove psychologically difficult, since you probably do have a lot to say and your website probably seems like the logical place to say it. And it may well be the right place to say all that, just so long as the saying of it doesn't detract from your site's main function, getting folks all the way to paying.

+ Should you provide many sorts of services and offerings or should you focus on just a few?

It is hard to focus on a just a single service or a few offerings if, over time, you've begun to provide many services and have created many offerings. While a clean, simple website may function the best, if you have many things to sell then, well, you have many things to sell. A time may come—hopefully, it will—when you have classes, trainings, workshops, programs, ebooks, and multiple services to sell and presumably you'll want all of those sold from the same website, your main one. The task then is a design task where prospective customers both don't get overwhelmed by your offerings and also have a clear path to purchasing any particular offering. This is usually done via a clean website store where each

service or product is clearly described and easy to purchase. Should you provide many services and offerings? Over time, yes, absolutely. Your challenge then is to have your website design support those various services and offerings, so that folks don't get confused or overwhelmed and so that each product or service has its own clear, easy, direct route to the check-out counter.

I'm sure you've gotten the headline. You must make choices and not get stuck trying to figure out what's "the best way" or "the perfect way" to create, design, organize and structure your website. Build your website in beta, have some trusted friends and colleagues look at it, ask them that most pertinent question —"Does this work?"—and move along to getting it up and out into the world.

Ron Wheatley has been my web designer and webmaster for the past fifteen years. He works specifically with coaches to help them create websites that work. Here are some of his suggestions about coaching websites. Ron explained:

To build a strong website that grows your coaching business you will want to include five key elements and consider a handful of key topics. This will help you develop the language and frame the services offered on your site.

Here are the five key elements:

1) A clear description of what is on offer, who you serve and why. This is often described as "service niche, messaging and value."

2) A call to action – visitors must know what you want them to do (subscribe to your newsletter, schedule a free consultation, purchase a class or workshop, etc.)

3) Establish your authority (with a strong biography, information about your publications, reviews of your publications, endorsements of your coaching, etc.)

4) Email capture form – you want a means to collect email addresses, usually as part of a simple sales funnel

5) Contact information that is clear, easy to find, and easy to use

A site may also contain other elements like a store, an FAQ section, a blog, etc. But the above five elements are vital.

You also need to develop language. In creating content for your site, it is important that the language connect with the visitor, be free of jargon and consider the following topics:

+ What are you really providing? What are your niches, your messages, and your value statements? What is a niche? Your niche is the sliver of the population that would most value your service. Selling to everyone isn't practical or desired. It may feel counter intuitive, but a focused niche has a greater chance of success, particularly for a coach or solo business owner.

+ What is your prospective client's pain and how can you help? Clients have a pain point that they cannot solve on their own. All sales are built around this concept. The pain point doesn't have to be life or death but it does have to be important to the client. The more acute the pain point, then the more urgent the need of a solution. Think about your prospective clients. What are their pain points? Create language for your site that shows that you understand their problems.

+ Keep your message clear

Your message isn't just a sales pitch. Your message is what you stand for. Your message must also be framed for your client's ears. Your challenge is to meet your prospective clients where they currently are and not where they might be or should be. Remember, they might know they have a pain/problem but they might not be capable of brainstorming a clear solution. That's where you come in, with a clear message that presents compelling solutions to their challenges.

+ Clearly identify your service point

Your service point is the contact point that makes your work possible. This is where you make your money and your business provides its true service. In many cases it is at the heart of your unique talents. What are your products and services? Identify the services throughout your site and include the details on a Products/Services page. Create a simple sales funnel that aims folks to this page and then on to the check-out counter.

Your website is vital because it is the way that prospective customers become actual customers. It is much more than your business card: it is your store. What does any well-functioning store need? Traffic. A brand. Products and services that are wanted. Sales, specials, bonuses, and free gifts. And a clear aisle to the check-out counter. Designing and building your website, whether you do it yourself or collaborate with a web designer, and maintaining it, whether you do it yourself or hire a webmaster to maintain it, are crucial tasks in building your great coaching practice.

15. Stocking Your Website Store

Your website announces your services and your products. These are the items that you're selling. You might also sell other things from your website, like the services and products of others via affiliate programs.

You sell these various things by describing them and by inviting folks to purchase them. The typical way they purchase these items is by being directed to and visiting your website store, that is, the section of your website where purchases can be made. Here people can pay, usually via credit card or Paypal, you receive notification of the payment via email instantaneously, and the money appears in your account.

What might your website store include? It might include all of the following:

- + Your coaching services and your coaching packages. Say that you provide a single-session way of paying and also three packages, one that includes email coaching, another that includes participation in a support group, and a third that provides a discount for purchasing multiple sessions at once. These, then, become four distinct items in your store, each with its own place and price.

- + Your upcoming classes, workshops, retreats, and trainings. Say that you're running an online class starting in January, a physical workshop in Rome in February, a retreat in the south of France in April, and an online training in July. Each of these would be a distinct item in your store, with its own place and price. You would now have eight items in your store, the four coaching service items and these four items.

- + Your downloadable products. Say that you've produced an audio program of meditations, a video teleconference based on interviews you conducted, a text-based class, and a training made up of audios, videos, and text. These four are products that you would sell at your store, increasing the total products at your store to twelve.

- + Your ebooks. Say that over time you create a series of four ebooks, each of which explains a technique you've developed. These four become products you

sell at your store (as well as on Amazon and other outlets), increasing the total products at your store to sixteen.

+ Your affiliate products. Say that there are four programs developed by other coaches that you respect, that you feel comfortable promoting and selling, and that come with affiliate opportunities (that is, when you sell one of those programs, you get a percentage of the sale, typically from a low of 10% to as much as 50%). These four affiliate opportunities become products that you sell at your store, increasing that total number to twenty.

Over time, this is how you create a well-stocked website store. You might design your website store so that these products appear as five rows of four products each or in some other way that makes it easy for folks to understand what you are selling. A prospective customer would click on the icon for that product, learn more about that product, and be provided with an easy way to add that product to his or her shopping cart and proceed to the check-out counter. There he or she might pay \$5.99 for an ebook or \$175 for a coaching session or \$795 for the workshop you're running in Spain or \$975.99 for all three. You would receive notification of the sale and the payment would appear in your account.

Let me explain a bit more about the affiliate piece. There are many affiliate opportunities out there. They all work roughly the same way. You sign up to become an affiliate for a particular service or product, you are given a unique link to use on your site (it might be a logo button, a banner, or something else, but essentially it is a link) and whenever someone comes to your site, clicks on that link, and makes a purchase at the product or service's home site, you receive a percentage of the sale.

How might this work for you? Say that you are coaching musicians. You might take a look at music schools, at online instrument shops, at services and trainings for musicians, and see if you can find affiliate opportunities. You would vet each of these by examining it closely to make sure that it aligns with your values and principles and to make sure that it seems like a worthwhile product or service and if it meets your standards, you would contact that entity and begin the process of becoming an affiliate. At the end of that process, you would add a link to that product or service to your store; and if a visitor to your site clicks on through and purchases that product or service, you would (eventually) receive your commission.

Here's how Martina, a Swedish coach-in-training living in Switzerland, thought about these matters and described the cultural differences she faces:

I've decided to really think about my website store and possible affiliate products, because I'm right in the middle of working on my website, translating it from French to Swedish and English. This is a great amount of work, and at the same time, I've been thinking about how to create a website store and what products to put in there.

Of course, I'll be selling my own services and products on my website store, but it had never crossed my mind that I could actually sell affiliate products. Having a coaching practice in Switzerland is a lonely kind of business, and coaches are in general very reticent to collaborate with other coaches. Most schools and institutes don't sell their courses online. I've had a look at other coaches' websites, and none of them sell their products or services through the Internet. Coaching is still a face-to-face business here in Switzerland, and professional coaches do not care much for giving their prices on the web.

Talking about money in Switzerland is taboo and showing your prices on the web even more so, except for such products as food, toys, books, and the like. So, what affiliate products could I sell through my website store? Hmm, I admit that this seems like a very difficult question to answer. Since I will mainly focus on gifted and highly sensitive people, keeping creativity coaching as an additional asset, finding affiliate products will be no easy matter.

For the moment, giftedness is not well-known and there are no specific products, schools or institutes that offer anything online. Online-shopping isn't that widespread in Switzerland yet, and people normally prefer paying cash for services or receiving a bill after the work has been done. The way people buy and sell here in Switzerland is so different from what is common in the USA, so for the moment I will keep the possibility of affiliate products in mind and whenever I sense that a collaboration could be possible, I will suggest one.

Like Martina, you may not find it easy to stock your store with affiliate products right off the bat, but over time you are likely to find some opportunities and, as Martina suggests for herself, you might also reach out when you see a useful product or service that doesn't currently have an affiliate opportunity and

mention how much you would like to be an affiliate of theirs. This may spur them to create an affiliate program—and you would be in on the ground floor of that program!

Also—and no doubt you would not want to tackle this right off the bat, as it takes a bit of technological savvy—you might create affiliate opportunities for some of your own programs or products: say, for your most popular downloadable program. Then, when you approach partners, you have something very tangible to offer them, namely the possibility of making 25% (say) of each sale of your program generated through the link that you are happy to provide them with. This can be a powerful inducement for someone with a big list to announce your program—and an excellent way for you to generate passive income.

Personally, I love my website store. I love how it looks, how it functions, and the money it generates. I love adding an item—say, when I announce my annual European Deep Writing workshop, which I run in places like Paris, Rome, London, and Prague—and I love it when a Paypal icon appears in my email inbox, indicating that a sale has been made. Opening that email is like opening a present! Sometimes it represents the sale of a \$2.99 ebook and sometimes it represents the sale of coaching services that may cost over a thousand dollars. What will the next email bring? What will your emails bring? Create your website store, stock it over time with your services and products, and get ready to see.

16. Building and Retaining Your List

“Your list” is shorthand for your ability to reach folks. You might reach folks via an electronic newsletter that you send out regularly or intermittently, a physical flyer, a brochure or a postcard that you mail, or an announcement that you make on your blog, via your podcasts, or to your social media contacts.

The most usual sense of the phrase “building your list” refers to the efforts you make to add email addresses to your email list. You acquire these email addresses by inviting people to subscribe to your newsletter, to join your community, or in some other way to stay apprised of your offerings. That is, they “opt in” to receive further emails from you.

Why might they opt in? Typically, because you are offering them something for free, something at a reduced rate, or some special privilege (like being the first to know about your upcoming activities). A customary way to do this is the following. A visitor finds your website, he or she sees your prominent invitation (often positioned at the upper right of your website), and opts in.

What might your “prominent invitation” say? It might say any of the following:

- + “Grab your great FREE ten tips ebook here!”
- + “Be the first to learn about our upcoming events!”
- + “Want great discounts? Learn about them here!”
- + “All my best tips, available to you free each week!”
- + “Join our vibrant, growing community!”
- + “Get a sneak peek at my next class!”
- + “Read the first chapter of my new book for FREE!”
- + “Don’t miss all the latest news and insider scoops!”

Of course, if you don't have many visitors to your site, you won't be able to grow your newsletter list very quickly. How can you increase traffic to your site or find other ways to have folks arrive at your newsletter offer? Here are some simple list-building strategies. If you get in the habit of doing them day-in and day-out, you'll build your list over time:

- + Whenever you speak in the world, say at a Chamber of Commerce meeting, and if the venue permits it, pass around a sheet of paper so that folks can add their names to your newsletter list.

- + When you give a workshop or training, invite folks to subscribe to your newsletter and remember to pass around a sheet of paper so that they can sign up on the spot.

- + Whenever you reach out to partners and ask them to announce a service or product of yours, include an ask that your newsletter (and newsletter link) get mentioned.

- + When you add a new free gift to your newsletter capture area, make that fact widely known through your social media contacts, among your partners, and to your own list (inviting them to let their peeps know about this excellent new free offering). You might include occasionally changing (and maybe upgrading) your free offering on your to-do list of ongoing practice-building tasks.

- + Periodically ask the folks you know to announce the existence of your newsletter to the folks *they* know. You might do this, for example, in the month before a new training begins or before an appearance you're making. Your pitch might sound like: "If you enjoy getting my newsletter, let your peeps know about it! They might be really interested to hear that I'm appearing on XYZ show next month to talk about my new ABC coaching program!"

- + Give something away for free that you previously charged for, for the sake of building your list. Say that you have an ebook that you are selling at your website store for \$12.95. For a period of time, make that ebook a free offering to anyone who subscribes to your newsletter and announce that free offering to all of your social media contacts.

As you build your list, make sure to use it! Get in the habit of sending out regular announcements to your list, most usually in the form of a newsletter that you send out regularly, maybe weekly or monthly. There are many services that provide you with the technology to design and send out your newsletter, either for free (if your list is small) or for a monthly fee (as your list grows). As I write this, the best known of these services are Constant Contact and MailChimp; and many other similar services exist as well. Naturally there will be a learning curve involved and choices to make regarding your newsletter's design, but once you get the hang of it you'll find it quite easy to get your newsletter out to your list in a regular way.

You want to build your list and you want to use your list. You also want to retain your list! A newsletter that strikes the wrong note can lose you 10% of your list overnight. One well-known artist, whose large list numbered many nature lovers and environmental activists, thoughtlessly posted a paean to his all-terrain-vehicle adventure through a pristine wilderness. A full 20% of his list deserted him. The messages you send out, whether via your newsletter, your website copy, your ebooks, your webinars, or in any other way, must have a risk-adverse quality to them if you want to retain the list you've spent so much time and energy building.

Likewise, you want to retain your most loyal customers.

A small percentage of your list are your loyal customers, those folks who are most interested in what you do. They are the lifeblood of your practice and the folks most likely to pay real attention to what you're doing, take a workshop you offer, buy a product you roll out, and talk you up to their peeps. You will probably get to know many of these folks by name, because they comment on your blog posts, send you emails with questions, come to your in-person talks, and take your workshops more than once.

You'll want to do the following with everyone but with your loyal customers especially:

+ Communicate with them regularly. Don't let months go by without letting them know what you're doing. I send out a weekly newsletter and have been doing so for many years. You may want communicate less frequently than that or even more frequently, but do make it a habit to send out regular news, at least once a

month, even if you have nothing spectacular to report. Your loyal customers really do want to know what you're up to!

+ Communicate personally with your best customers and your long-time customers. Some folks are worth your individual time and attention. And make sure to pass along information. Say that someone has taken one of your workshops three times and you become aware of some bit of information that might be quite useful to that person. Take a moment and drop that person an email passing along the information. You don't have to do this often or with everyone, but if a natural occasion arises to pass along some useful information to one of your loyal customers, do so!

+ Provide great customer service. It may be your policy, your habit and your custom to provide great customer service as a matter of course, and that's great, but you will want to pay special attention to providing great customer service to your top fans and your most loyal customers. This means replying to their emails the fastest, dealing with their complaints quickly and fully, and trying your best to handle any special needs they might have or any special requests they might make.

There are many other efforts you might make to retain your most loyal customers, for instance by providing them with incentives and being flexible with your policies when it comes to them, and many wise and careful tactics you might employ to try to retain all the folks on your list, for instance by double-checking your messages to weed out red flags and by avoiding contacting your list when you're feeling hot under the collar. The headline: building your list is super-important; retaining it, just as important!

Your list is very important, maybe even the single most important aspect of your practice. Even if only a small percentage of your list reacts to an announcement of yours—say, even if only 1% of your list reacts—once you have a list of thousands, that 1% amounts to a significant number and the very best way available to you to fill up a workshop or a training or to invite new clients aboard. This means that list-building should be among your top priorities and a key to creating a great coaching practice.

17. Producing and Selling Products

A service is something you do, like coaching a client one-on-one. A product is something you create and sell, like an ebook. There are many things that can be both: you might physically deliver a workshop, which is a service, and then you might also turn that workshop into a book, an ebook, a series of DVDs, a home study program, or some other product.

Your great coaching practice is logically and naturally made up of both services and products. Your services require your presence and are in that sense “active,” while products do not require your presence and therefore produce “passive income.” That passive income can become a significant part of your overall coaching income—and a real time-saver!

Let’s imagine the array of products that might flow from your Great Motivational Workshop. You deliver your Great Motivational Workshop in person, say once a year in your hometown, once a year at a conference center (like Omega or Esalen), once a year at a location you’d like to visit (like a Hawaiian island, a Greek island, or the south of France) and once a year online. In each instance you are actually there, handling the logistics, delivering the material, available to answer questions, and so on.

What products might flow from this workshop? Consider the following:

+ An ebook. You might create a small or large ebook from the material you present in your workshop. This requires that you format the material in a way that allows it to be downloaded easily, create a cover for the ebook, add it to the products on your website store, and perhaps also make it available on the other outlets where ebooks are sold, for instance on Amazon and through some service that delivers the book to additional outlets, like iTunes.

If you do not know how to do these various things, there will be a real learning curve involved. But as you probably will be wanting to sell many different ebooks over the course of your great coaching career, this may be something that you in fact want to learn and keep abreast of as the worlds of publishing and technology hurtle forward. If this isn’t something you want to learn but still want to do, you will need to find a person or a service to help you, hopefully as inexpensively as

possible, as your ebook isn't likely to generate enough income to warrant spending a lot of money on creating it.

+ A print-on-demand book. When you create your ebook and upload it onto Amazon, you can also simultaneously provide it as a print-on-demand paperback to anyone who would like to purchase it that way. Amazon, through its Kindle Publishing arm, allows for the easy conversion of your ebook to a print-on-demand book at no cost to you (Amazon makes its money by taking a percentage of the sale when one of your books sells).

+ A published book. You might test the waters of the traditional publishing world by preparing a nonfiction book proposal based on the material you present in your workshop and querying literary agents and/or editors at publishing houses about your project. One reason to do this is that a traditional publishing contract comes with an advance that might amount to a low of no advance (many academic publishers provide nothing by way of an advance) to a very large amount (in the hundreds of thousands of dollars), with most advances falling into the range of two or three thousand dollars to fifteen or twenty thousand dollars. In this scenario, the marketplace does not require that you write the whole book before approaching agents or editors but only requires that sales document of the nonfiction writer, the nonfiction book proposal. So, you might go this route even before you have your ebook written.

+ A text-based class. There are two senses of the word "class." There are classes that you actually deliver, either in-person or online, where you interact with participants and make yourself available to participants. Then there are classes that you prepare just once and that require no active participation from you as participants download, receive, or visit your class lessons. These lessons might be in the form of text (just words), audio, or video, or some combination of two or three of these.

A typical scenario is that you create eight text-based lessons of perhaps 1000 to 1500 words each, you call these eight lessons an eight-week class, and participants read each lesson at a website where the class is made available or perhaps receive the lesson as a weekly email. Naturally, these lessons could also be bundled together and simply called an ebook, but it has become a custom of the marketplace to provide information in this "class" format and millions of users

are comfortable paying for information in this format (and often paying more for it in this format than they would if it were presented as an ebook).

You might sell your class from your own website, from the website of a service that specializes in helping you format and sell classes, or from a website that includes classes among its offering. That is, you might sell your class yourself or you might offer your class to entities that sell classes—or both, since these entities typically do not require an exclusive arrangement. In my own case, I've partnered with dailyom.com, who have sold several of my classes for many years now. Proceeds are split fifty-fifty, and because they have a large subscriber list and because they regularly feature one or another of my classes, this is a profitable arrangement for me.

Your class might be made up of just text-based lessons but it might also include audio lessons, video lessons, or a combination of all three. Say that your class is made up of twelve lessons. You might do a two-minute audio or video introduction to each lesson that accompanies the fuller, text-based explanation of the material. You record your audio or video lesson introductions on your phone or using the software that is already on your computer: nothing higher quality or fancier is required. You might then turn to a service like teachable.com that allows you to upload your audio or video lessons and text lessons and turn them into a seamless class. Their website then hosts the class, handles payment for the class and the delivery of the class, and takes a percentage of sales for its service.

+ A webinar. You might approach an organization and offer to present a webinar for its members: that is, an audio or video talk that typically lasts an hour or ninety minutes. Or it might be the case that some organization approaches you and asks you to deliver such a talk. The talk that you deliver is typically recorded and, depending on the arrangement you make with the organization, often made available to you for your own use, which might include selling it from your site. This is a relatively simple way to stock your website with product: folks purchase webinars at your site and you receive regular passive income whenever a sale is made. Of course, you might also create webinars yourself, without waiting for an organization to come forward and sponsor them.

+ A teleconference. The following idea is rather time-consuming, complicated, and expensive. But many coaches do it and make good use of it. You approach top people in your field, the folks you presume have good-sized lists. You invite them

to be interviewed by you and to partner with you by announcing your teleconference to their peeps. You create a website for the conference, which is usually offered to participants for free, conduct the interviews (often between a dozen and two dozen), and deliver the interviews to the folks who have signed up to hear or see the interviews. You make money from this in two ways: by charging folks who would like to “own” the whole conference and by having acquired what may amount to many thousands of new emails for your own list. To repeat, this is a complicated, time-consuming, and expensive product—but I wanted to provide you with one example of a “high end” product.

This lesson only scratches the surface on the subject of products you might create and sell. A headline that I’d like you to retain is that we are not talking about just items that you sell off your own website but also about items that are sold much more widely. Think of the difference between trying to sell your line of clothes out of your garage versus that line of clothes being featured in a well-known department store chain. One of your goals and one of the ways that you can turn your practice into a great practice is by finding partners who will want to stock and promote your classes, programs, and other products. If you can find even one such partner, that may mean thousands of dollars of passive income annually.

18. Creating Your File of Queries and Responses

It will save you a lot of time, time that you can use for other practice-building activities, if you create and then reuse (customizing as necessary) an array of queries and responses tailored to your practice's needs.

Having created these boilerplate, reusable queries and responses, you don't have to "think twice" when someone asks you a certain sort of question or when you get the itch to query someone with a class proposal, an article idea, and some other ask.

What sort of template emails do I mean? Here, for example, is the email I use when someone pays for a coaching session. First, a client gets in contact with me, almost always via email. In response, I say something like, yes, I'm available, please go to my site and pay, and then we'll begin. If he wants to begin, he goes to my site and pays. When he pays, I get a notification from Paypal that the payment has been made. I then send my new client the following email with the subject line "Beginning." (Naturally I put the person's first name in.)

Hello,

Great to be working with you! I'd like us to begin by doing a little email work leading up to us chatting. If you would, I'd love it if you'd answer the following three questions.

1. Can you start by describing your situation a little? What sort of art do you do, what's been your history with art-making and art-selling, what ups and downs have you experienced, and so on? Please write as little or as much as you like—but enough to give me a starting picture of "where you're at and where you've been."

2. What are your biggest challenges right now, either internal or external, with respect to your creative life?

3. What would you like to accomplish during these next few months with respect to your creative life? Do you maybe have some "minimum goals" and also some "Wow, that would be great!" goals?

I look forward to getting your responses. Take as long as you like but try not to labor too long over this <smile>. And, of course, add anything you think is relevant that these three questions don't get at.

Best,

Eric

This template email gets me a lot of useful information. Sometimes I get a return email with the information in just hours and sometimes it takes a week. Sometimes I have to press a little for it. Then, with all that information in hand, I usually will ask a follow-up question or two for clarification—almost always there's something I want to know a little bit more about. In this way, we begin. And the template email is a valuable part of the process!

What sorts of queries, responses, and other sorts of emails might you want to prepare? Here are some examples:

+ A response to someone interested in your coaching services. This might look like: "Thanks so much for your email. Yes, I am available to work with you. We would do two half-hour phone sessions a month and maintain email contact in between. The cost is \$250/month and I ask for a three-month commitment. Would you like to begin?"

+ A response to someone interested in an upcoming class or workshop. This might look like: "Thanks so much for your inquiry. Yes, there are still spots in the workshop. I've attached a flyer on the workshop—do let me know if you happen not to be able to open it. Once you've had a chance to look at it, let me know if you have any questions. I know we're going to have an excellent time at the workshop and I hope to see you aboard!"

+ A query to someone you hope might sponsor a class of yours. This might look like: "I've presented my class on great auditions at many schools and workshop centers to an enthusiastic reception. I think it's a perfect match for your venue. Do you think you might like me to present my class at your venue?"

+ A query to someone you want to sponsor you, host you, or include you. This might look like: "I would love to do a regular feature on your blog as a guest

blogger. I am one of the leading experts on great auditions and I bet your audience would love some regular tips on great auditions. Would you like me to do some guest blogging for you? I'd love it!"

+ A request for an endorsement from a friendly client who has recently completed coaching. This might look like, "It's been a pleasure working with you! If you feel like providing me with an endorsement for use on my website or in my promotional materials, I would greatly appreciate that!"

+ A request to be interviewed on a podcast, radio show, or television show. This might look like, "I've presented my ideas on how to realize your dreams, achieve your goals, and live your life purposes on a number of shows, including X, Y, and Z. Your audience might love to hear my top tips! I'd love to be a guest on your show. I have a full press packet ready to send along to you if by chance the idea of interviewing me interests you."

+ To the coordinator of a conference where you'd like to present a workshop or a keynote address, sent a full year before the conference date. This might look like, "I'm very much looking forward to your conference in XYZ place next year. I have an excellent workshop called 'Great Auditioning Made Easy!' that I've successfully presented at A, B and C. I wonder if you might like me to present it at your conference? It can be tailored to fit any time slot and it always gets raves!"

+ When and if you create an affiliate program and want to reach out to prospective affiliates. This might look like, "I've created an excellent multimedia downloadable program called 'Great Auditioning Made Easy!' that I think your subscribers will find really valuable. It's priced at \$195 and I'm offering a 35% affiliate commission on each unit sold. That's more than \$60 to you on each sale! Please let me know if this affiliate opportunity interests you."

Having these prepared emails available, sitting on your desktop in a folder marked, say, "Emails ready to go!", allows you not to have to think when you spot a blog you might want to blog for or when you spot a venue where you might want to give a class. You can instantly shoot out a query or a response and not get bogged down in reinventing the email wheel every time something occurs.

Care to give this a try? First, identify some template emails that make sense in your situation. Second, create them. Here's how Charlene, a coach-in-training, tackled this exercise:

Here's what I've put together so far:

For someone interested in my coaching

First email:

"Thank you for your email. Yes, I do have a couple of spots open to work with you. Do you already know what package you would like? If not, I invite you to consult the following page to learn all about them. Just a quick reminder that I ask for a two-month commitment for the first run. When would you like to begin?"

Second email:

If the person doesn't know which package to select or asks a question:

"I usually recommend the Cappuccino package so you have time to actually work your project between our live sessions and we keep in touch by email the other week. It is \$197 per month. The first step is to fill out this form before our first session. As soon as you send it back, we will make our first appointment and I will send you the first invoice. Can't wait to know all about your project!"

Well, that's a beginning!

I find my prepared emails very useful. They do much more than save me time. They keep me always ready to grab an opportunity and always ready to spend a spare moment doing something really productive, like asking for a book endorsement, a blogging gig, or a partnership. Indeed, having these prepared emails available may make all the difference between you doing something in the service of your practice virtually every day or making such efforts only very sporadically. I think you'll find them easy to create and invaluable. Take a little time and fill up a folder with prepared queries and responses right now!

19. Running Trainings

For our purposes, let's make the following simple distinction: folks take classes and workshops for personal development and they take trainings for professional development. This is an imperfect and too-simple distinction but it will help us better understand the core nature of trainings: that folks are intrinsically motivated to take trainings because they see a payoff in dollar signs at the end of the process.

As a result, because they see or sense this payoff, they are likely to pay more for a training than for a workshop or a class and they are likely to be more inclined to overcome obstacles (like travel expenses, taking time off from work, etc.) to take that training. To say this another way, trainings will prove easier for you to fill and more lucrative than workshops and classes, because prospective customers are more motivated to take trainings than to take classes or workshops.

The primary trainings that I offer are an introduction to creativity coaching training, an advanced creativity coaching training, and a life purpose boot camp instructor training. The first two are designed to help participants become functioning creativity coaches who see clients and who make money from their coaching practice, and the third is designed to help participants learn how to teach classes based on my book *Life Purpose Boot Camp* and to make money from teaching those classes. More than one hundred folks annually take my sixteen-week online creativity coaching trainings, which I've been running for more than fifteen years now. These trainings make up a substantial portion of my annual income.

Let's create a hypothetical coach and track her journey from new coach to master trainer. Let's say that Marjorie is a new life coach who has taken many classes, workshops and trainings over the years, pursued many journeys and adventures, and is conversant in (if not expert in) Zen Buddhism, Taoism, breath work, mindfulness meditation, holistic healing, and various other methods, techniques, and orientations. She sees her coaching work as a way to integrate and incorporate these threads and presumes that after a little while it will become clear to her how to actually use these tools in her practice.

This goal of integrating her many passions and her many techniques will likely prove much less straightforward to achieve than she first imagined. It turns out not to be easy at all—or even appropriate, really—to try to “drop in” some technique when a client is telling his story or wants help with a particular real-world problem, like advancing in his career, building better relationships, or getting his recently-completed novel sold to a publisher. Marjorie learns pretty quickly that what she is primarily doing is being present, listening and responding to what her client is saying, offering suggestions, monitoring her client’s goals, exhorting and motivating her client, and so on; and that trying to introduce some technique or exercise into the mix feels rather artificial, arbitrary, and even unhelpful.

She sees that her background, while it informs who she is and what she does, can’t really be used precisely as a tool kit. At the same time, she notices something interesting. She notices that she is developing a way of working that includes inviting clients to journal. Over time, she refines this technique and marries it to another of her specialties, anxiety management. Now, at this juncture in her coaching practice, she presents virtually every client she coaches with the idea that keeping an Anxiety Awareness Journal might prove beneficial. Many of her clients take her up on this idea and in fact do find the effort worthwhile.

It naturally happens that she produces an ebook on how to keep an Anxiety Awareness Journal, which she first provides as a free giveaway to induce website visitors to subscribe to her newsletter and which she then turns into a product that she sells on her site, on Amazon, and on other outlets. Then one day the following thought occurs to her: why not train coaches, therapists and other helpers in her journaling method? Isn’t it possible that her Anxiety Awareness Journaling Method might seem really useful to colleagues and maybe especially to new coaches and new therapists looking for tools to add to their toolkit? She thinks about this a bit more and decides that she is going to offer an Anxiety Awareness Journaling Method Training.

Now she has to decide what the training will look like, how she’ll run it, where and how she’ll promote it and advertise it, and whether she’ll announce it before it is “all put together” or right away, so as to gauge prospective interest. As she thinks about this some more, she decides to brand her workshop as the Marjorie Morningstar Method of Anxiety Awareness Journaling. She likewise decides that

she will run her first training online, as that strikes her as much easier and more efficient to do than to try to run it live, that it will run for eight weeks, and that she will conduct the training via email-based lessons (rather than, say, by phone calls, video conferences, etc.).

She identifies the eight lessons, picks a price for her training, creates a description for her training, puts that description up on her website, adds a place to purchase it to her website store, and begins to announce it to her list and her social media contacts. She sets the date of the training four months out, so as to give folks enough time to hear about it and so as to give herself enough time to work out any practical and technological details. She announces the training to her own list once a month for those four months and notices that she gets a sign-up or two each time she announces it. She also announces it to her social media contacts every week and sees that those efforts, too, generate interest and sales.

Twelve folks sign up for her first training and pay \$475 each to learn the Marjorie Morningstar Method, netting her \$5700 (as there are no expenses). She learns a lot from this first training about what works and what doesn't work and decides that she will run this training three times a year. This she does, with each training growing progressively larger as folks begin to hear about and know about the Marjorie Morningstar Method.

Next, she reaches out to the large workshops centers to see if they would like her to present her training at their center. This has always been a dream of hers, to teach at Esalen, Kripalu, Omega, and Hollyhock, and she knows that while she will make less money per person at these conference centers than through the trainings she runs herself (she is now charging \$575 for her training and knows that she will probably only make between \$100 - \$200 per participant at a workshop center), she will also become much better known by appearing at them. She reaches out and one of those centers decides to give her training a try. This becomes a lovely annual gig for her that she looks forward to year-in and year-out.

We could continue to follow Marjorie as she adds new trainings, expands her reach into Europe by running, first, one Tuscan retreat annually, then an annual Tuscan retreat and a Paris intensive, and so on. I'm sure you get the picture. As you progress as a coach and as you learn what works best for you and what works best for your clients, the opportunity will naturally arise for you to teach what you've honed to other coaches, to therapists and other helping professionals, and

to anyone interested in creating a revenue stream for themselves because they can now teach your technique or method. These trainings are likely to become the lifeblood of your practice and one of your more lucrative enterprises.

As a new coach just starting out, it's unlikely that you will have some training to offer right off the bat. But you may discover that within as little as a year or two of working with clients and offering classes and workshops that you are ready to train folks in some technique or orientation that you've created, tested in the crucible of your work with clients, and know really works and really helps. It may surprise you just how quickly this aspect of your practice becomes a reality. In order for this to happen, you will need to step into the role of trainer: I hope you'll take that step as soon as the time is ripe.

20. Timing Your Efforts

It can prove very hard to know what comes before what as you attempt to build your practice. Should you seek out clients before you have a website? Should you look for places to present your class before you have your class fully prepared? Should you look for places to give a talk before you have the talk ready?

What is the proper order of things?

I think that as a rule it is probably better to “jump ahead” of yourself rather than imagining that you need to do things in a linear way. It is probably really a fine idea to create a class, workshop, or presentation only up to the description phase—to a place where you can describe it well—and then begin to find places to give it, even though you don’t have the actual class, workshop or presentation prepared.

There are several good reasons to operate this way. First, if you get a nice gig, that will provide you with motivation to actually create the class or presentation. Second, getting a gig gives you a natural, rather than an artificial, deadline for creating the class, workshop, or presentation; then you can create a timeline back from the deadline and organize yourself around that deadline and that timeline. Third, as you offer your class, workshop or presentation in the world you make yourself known to organizations, popular websites, retreat centers, schools, etc., who may want to offer you something else (a column, say, or a different class) or refer clients to you.

This process is akin to writing a nonfiction book proposal, the sales tool of the nonfiction writer, rather than writing the whole book first. In the world of nonfiction publishing, you put together just enough of a proposal to interest a prospective publisher; then, if the publisher is interested, you actually write the book. In building your coaching practice, you may want to do “just enough” with respect to a class, workshop, presentation, or other aspect of your practice to be able to strongly articulate that something, float it in the world to see if that something is wanted, and only if it is wanted actually prepare that something. This procedure allows you to so-to-speak test whether your classes, workshops, presentations, and similar products are wanted before you have to “go all the way” and create them.

Think through this matter. What do you see as the upside and the downside of offering your classes, workshops, presentations, and similar products before you actually create them? What do you see as the upside and the downside of trying to attract clients before you have a website, a brochure, business cards, etc., in place? Can you reach out to clients *right now* or do you need to wait until you have x, y, and z in place?

Here's how one coach-in-training, Rebecca, considered these matters:

The idea of launching classes before they exist—that's absolutely terrifying. But it's also very realistic – without a deadline on the horizon, well, things will not get done.

If I sketch out the outline of a class, I can imagine setting the launch date, and then scrambling to do the work to get it done – that does sound very doable. Even if that first one is a bit topsy-turvy, it has certainly worked well enough for me when I've taught at colleges – there is a class outline, there is a series of exercises and learning outcomes, and the deeper you get into class, the more you can continue to adapt the individual lessons to the way the class is unfolding in actuality. Yes, this is a great idea, to launch with the outline, and have the real-life deadline provide the motivation to complete the course creation!

Here's how another coach-in-training, Maria, thought the matter through:

I see the following as the pros of operating this way:

+ I do not waste time by creating a product nobody wants

+ While conducting a course, I'm learning what my customers need and I can adjust to their needs

+ I can earn money sooner

+ I start to take action

And the cons?

+ I tend to be nervous when I am not well prepared

+ I'm afraid of offering something that doesn't have value for my clients

+ I'm afraid of ending up in a stressful situation. Once I created a course more or less on the fly and then had to run it while having responsibilities as a mother and other responsibilities during a stressful holiday season. That wasn't very good.

What might help?

+ Knowing that the first time is the most stressful time – things will change for the better over time

+ Preparing at least a good structure for the class or course before announcing it

+ Start with a small course

+ Outsourcing the most difficult tasks, the tasks I hate and where I'm very slow

+ Remembering that I am an expert - I know a lot about my prospective course subjects

I think I just need to trust myself and move forward!

A third coach-in-training, Cynthia, explained:

I think that right now, getting out there and seeing who's interested in what I am planning to do is much more important than investing lots of time and energy in showing the world that I am an expert with a website and products and a blog and all the rest.

In considering an idea for a workshop, I asked several members of a business group I'm in to attend a 'creating your business' workshop, to help me identify areas that were of interest and useful to them. The feedback was really useful, and I was happy that I had only come up with a vague workshop outline and left them to fill in the areas that they needed. This worked really well!

Without having experience as a creativity coach, I asked people to join me for some creativity coaching, and their responses and feedback have shown me areas to explore with greater depth, how they respond to creativity coaching and how I could meet their needs and others in similar circumstances. This has worked, too!

These two efforts helped me test the waters and helped me redefine what I will offer, how I am going to offer it and to whom. It has also led to a speaking engagement for another business group later on in the year. All this, with me just saying "I don't know how this could work but would you be interested in..." It has been really refreshing knowing very little but having lots of enthusiasm and curiosity about the possibilities that are out there.

At this stage of my coaching life, as an absolute beginner, I feel that it's more important for me to spend time discovering what works, what feels right and where am I finding interest and excitement. I can then use that information to work deeper and more intensively on the areas that work for me and my local audience. The trick for me with whatever I attempt is to say Yes! with confidence and then go home, panic and then get the work done.

A friend reminded me yesterday that we are our own Gurus. We know what needs to be done, when it needs to be done by and how we need to do it, we only need to clear our minds, breathe deeply to remind ourselves we can do it, and then just do it. I am finding that this is really true.

The headline is that, with every single aspect of your great coaching practice, you will need to initiate and dive into activities that you have not yet perfected, that make you anxious, and that you may not really be ready to tackle. This includes coaching clients before you are really ready, running classes and workshops before you are really ready, speaking in the world before you are really ready, being interviewed before you are really ready, building your website before you are really ready, organizing a retreat in Paris or Bali before you are really ready ... and so on. We must do all of this before we are ready to do them!

If you wait for perfect calmness and perfect readiness you will never get started. It is very easy to avoid practice-building tasks like building your website, announcing your practice, picking your packages and prices, contacting potential partners, running your first class or workshop, writing your first ebook, etc. The right timing

of your efforts boils down to this simple rule: do it now, even if you are not really ready and before you are really ready. This is a headline key!

21. Creating Your Overall Plan, Your One-Year Plan, and Your Daily Plans

One of the things you do as a coach is help your clients articulate their goals and achieve their goals. To achieve their goals, they must put a plan or multiple plans into place and then execute that plan or those plans. A goal without a plan remains in the realm of fantasy. If your goal is to create a great coaching practice, you will want to articulate your plans, which ought to include these three at least: an overall plan, a one-year plan, and daily plans.

Personally, I also make use of weekly plans, monthly plans, and three-month plans. That may sound like an awful lot of planning but my professional life, which includes writing books and supporting the fifty books I've already had published, training creativity coaches forty-eight weeks of the year, staying on top of the logistics of my workshops (including my annual European Deep Writing workshop), blogging for *Psychology Today* and *Fine Art America*, writing a print column for *Professional Artist Magazine*, and a lot more, requires that I stay organized, get to all my tasks (including the ones I don't much love), and maintain and update my various plans.

You begin with an overall plan. That overall plan may not be clear to you at this time, even in vague outline. But you can still begin to tentatively flesh it out based on your understanding that your practice will include more, and perhaps a lot more, than just coaching one-on-one with clients. You might say to yourself, "My overall plan is to create a rich life under the umbrella of 'coaching' that includes helping individuals and groups, teaching interesting classes and leading interesting workshops, doing some traveling and speaking, and writing quite a bit, maybe both as a regular blogger and as an author of books." Your early overall plan might sound something like that.

The value of an overall plan of this sort, even if it is vague and tentative, is to help remind you not to focus too narrowly on any one aspect of practice-building, like garnering clients or building your website. By holding a large, panoramic vision and by remembering that "coaching" is a word you are using to represent a world of opportunity rather than a particular activity, you can keep many disparate activities on your plate at the same time, activities as disparate as beginning to think about the first book you might write, the first retreat you might run, or the

first video conference you might organize. The simplest way to articulate this overall plan might be, “I am going to do a lot.”

Next is your one-year plan. Your one-year plan comes in two senses, in the sense of a general plan and a specific plan. Your general one-year plan might be “to be nicely further along than I am today.” Or it might be “to have run several classes and to connect with several partners.” It might be “to feel like I have really made a start and to have made a few thousand dollars at least.” The main point of this general plan is to remind you of your intention to make steady progress during the course of the coming year through regular, daily effort.

Your more specific one-year plan might sound like: “I will contact six prospective partners in the next three months; I will get my class ready in four months and have it delivered online at least once by the six-month mark; I will do three public talks within the next six months; and I will try to get one new client every month this year.” Each of these naturally will need its own timeline and to-do list, since, for example, you can’t get your class ready in four months’ time if you forget about it for three-and-a-half months.

There are likewise two senses of daily planning, the general and the specific. The general has to do with simply knowing, acknowledging, and honoring that you are doing something, and maybe a lot of things, in the service of your coaching practice every day (or nearly every day). This general plan might sound exactly the same every day: “Today I will engage in practice-building activities.” You wake up knowing your plan: you know that you will be doing something. You don’t have to decide if you are doing something or debate about whether you are doing something: you know that you are.

The second sense has to do with the concrete plan for that day, which on a given day might sound like, “Today I am sending out at least ten emails in search of people who will announce my upcoming class”; “Today I’m contacting John, Bill and Mary to see if they’ll announce that I have several client openings,” and so on. Your general daily plan is that you will do *something*. Your specific daily plan consists of the tasks for that day. This is your daily practice-building to-do list, which might include items from yesterday and the day before, if you didn’t quite get to them, as well as your new tasks for today.

All of this comes under the heading of staying organized. How can you stay organized, given all the moving parts of a coaching practice and all the moving parts of life? Here are some tips that can help:

+ Protect your space. If you let people bother you, invade your space, and intrude on your work and thought processes, you are bound to stay disorganized. If you let things invade your space, like the laundry and unpaid bills, that also fosters disorganization. It is your job to protect your space from invasions: no one can do that for you.

+ Protect your time. You can protect your time or you can give it away. Has a free hour made itself available? You can squander it with some Internet surfing, game playing, television watching or email checking or you can work on one of your short-term or long-term practice-building projects. Is someone asking you to volunteer to run a conference or chair an organization? You can spend twenty hours a week that way or you could use those twenty hours building your coaching practice. That's your choice.

+ Better manage the anxiety of organization. Because organizing involves making choices and because choosing provokes anxiety, there is always a certain amount of anxiety lurking at the corners of our organizational efforts. Learn how to manage the anxiety of organizing!

+ Make sure to use small increments of time as they appear. We typically throw away fifteen minutes here and twenty minutes there by checking our email one more time or doing something distracting on the Internet. You might want to keep a separate to-do list of tasks that can be accomplished in just a few minutes and when you get those few minutes, consult your quick-task checklist and get one of those tasks checked off.

+ Get the moving parts of your long-term projects onto your daily to-do lists. If you only focus on your pressing short-term tasks, your long-term tasks will never get accomplished. You must organize your day around both the immediate and the long-term. Tasks like designing your website and getting it up and running, preparing your plan for locating and securing clients, creating and delivering a class or workshop, and so on, all need you to pay attention to them in a daily or at least a very regular way.

+ Regularly catch up with yourself. Your organizational scheme of today may not serve you or suit you six months from now or even next month. As life rushes by, we must somehow stop and make sure not only that we are organized but that we are organized in ways that make sense for this phase of our life and our career. Check in with yourself regularly, maybe once a week or once every two weeks, to see if you are still on track and to make sure that you know what updates and changes may be necessary.

Well, that's it for now! I hope that this book has helped you envision what your great coaching practice might look like and how you might go about achieving it. If you'd like to train with me, my online introduction to creativity coaching training and my online advanced creativity coaching training begin each February, June and September. You can take either, or both simultaneously, and progress quickly toward your goals. If you'd like to do some further reading, I recommend my books *Coaching the Artist Within* and *Secrets of a Creativity Coach*. Thanks for joining me on this adventure! You can learn more about what I do at <http://www.ericmaisel.com> and you can contact me at ericmaisel@hotmail.com.