



Amoráh ROSS :: MASTER CERTIFIED COACH

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Gateway to Coaching Artistry

The founders of our coaching profession were quite wise and visionary as they identified and defined the distinct *skill sets* that are the 11 ICF Core Coaching Competencies (CCCs). Our coaching colleagues, who have served on the ICF Credentialing and Program Accreditation Committee over the years, have been dedicated and diligent as they fleshed out the CCCs with defined *observable behaviors* that demonstrate these skill sets.

As a mentor coach and coach trainer for more than 14 years, I've worked with hundreds of coaches as they acquired and/or expanded their professional coaching expertise and artistry. In my many years as an ICF assessor, I've conducted numerous exams for ACC, PCC and MCC credential applicants. In all of these roles, I've seen coaches struggle to integrate and effectively demonstrate the ICF Core Coaching Competencies (CCCs) in a way that complemented their unique coaching style and supported their pursuit of coach training certification and/or coaching credential.

A Fresh Context for the ICF CCCs

Over the past year, I formulated a tool to support easier integration and a deeper understanding of the CCCs. My students and coach clients have found this tool very valuable because it helps them take their minds off the CCCs as separate and distinct skill sets, instead applying them as a fluid process, which then frees them up to relax and trust the **process** that the CCCs represent.

The International Coach Federation (ICF) defines coaching as: "Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative *process* that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential."

One dictionary definition of 'process' is, "*a systematic series of actions directed to some end.*" The ICF coaching competencies represent the *systematic series of actions* of the "thought-provoking and creative process that inspires..." and the '*end*' to which these actions are directed is, "...to maximize their personal and professional potential."

That's right; I invite you to consider that these 11 ICF Core Coaching Competencies outline a **process** that has a beginning, middle and an end. I also submit that this process, **in the entirety of its 11 components**, is what **differentiates** a coaching conversation from any other type of conversation.



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A Lens for Mastering the ICF CCCs as a Process

An analogy that can describe this coaching conversation process is that of placing a load of clothing in a washing machine:

- CCC #1 Ethics & Standards: the outer machine body within which all other coaching competencies occur;
- CCC #2 Establishing the Coaching Agreement: the session agreement defines the 'clothing' to be washed: this 'clothing' contains 4 components: [1] the session topic; [2] a desired outcome; [3] the underlying issues (meaning) that are related to the session topic and desired outcome; and, [4] measures of success. A shorthand acronym for these components is **TOMS**: **T**opic, **O**utcome, **M**eaning and **S**uccess.



- CCC #3 Establishing Trust & Intimacy and #4 Coaching Presence: the washing machine's inner drum/container for the 'clothing' – the co-created space in which the conversation occurs;
- CCC #5 Active Listening, #6 Powerful Questioning & #7 Direct Communication: Represented by the **back and forth action within the drum** in which the 'clothing' washes. During this part of the process, *the coach's copious curiosity, willingness to 'not know' and partnership with the client* allow the 'clothing' to remove dirt and more clearly reveal the cloth. This propels the process toward the client's access to new awareness around the session topic and underlying issues as established in the session agreement;
- CCC #8 Creating Awareness: the 'rinse' cycle, which continues to use the back and forth action within the drum of CCCs 5 through 7 to identify insights relevant to the session's topic and underlying issues as established in the session agreement;
- CCC #9 Designing Actions and #10 Planning & Goal Setting: the 'spin' cycle that builds on the awareness/insights identified in the session and defines next steps as well as goals/timelines that will support that awareness, both as it relates to this session and/or to the client's overall coaching goals; and,
- CCC #11 Managing Progress & Accountability: the 'emptying out' cycle that supports the client to stay in forward motion, to define measures of



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success for their actions and that anchors the *meaning* of these actions as it relates to the underlying issues as established in the session agreement and/or to the client's overall coaching goals.

When washing a load of clothing, it is typical that one allows the process to continue from beginning through to the end. If one interrupts the washing process at any point before the emptying out cycle, the clothes either are not fully clean, or have not been thoroughly rinsed, or are not yet dry enough to move to the drying machine or clothesline.

By allowing each session to unfold within ALL of the competencies, the *process* has forward momentum from beginning to middle and through to the end.



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I recently spoke with a leadership development coach who is preparing for her MCC credential exams and introduced her to this analogy. Here is what she had to say just two days later:

“Our conversation has continued to resonate with me this week, and I wanted you to know how powerful it's been. Your perspective on how central curiosity is to the coaching relationship has allowed me to relax into my curiosity and, no surprise; the clients readily generate their own brilliance, actions, and results...and our conversation enabled me to shift back into a mutually trusting relationship with my clients in which they are free to discover what's true for them. Very fun.

As much as you are enabling your clients to change the world, I so appreciate that you are also sharing with coaches so you (and we) realize an even greater impact. I can't thank you enough!”

With each powerful coaching conversation, coaches are changing the way our clients experience themselves in their relationships with self and others, in the way they live their lives and in how they show up in their work.

My sincere hope is that this context for the CCCs and the lens of this analogy will inspire you, support the expansion of your coaching skill set, heighten your



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coaching artistry, and amplify the power of your coaching conversations with your clients.

BIO:

Amoráh Ross is a passionate advocate of coaching as a pathway to individual sovereignty, for the coaching profession as a catalyst for improved human connection, and for ICF credentialing as a hallmark of coaching excellence. She is an ICF Master Certified Coach, a certified Mentor Coach, and a seasoned coach trainer. A professional coach since 1997 and coach trainer and mentor since 1999, Amoráh also serves as an ICF credentialing assessor and on the ICF Global Standards Core Team. She served 3+ years on ICF's Credentialing and Program Accreditation Committee, and was its Vice-Chair in 2010. Amoráh lives near Seattle with her husband of 45 years and 2 miniature dachshunds. Positive Life Works™, www.amorah.com, (425) 788-4303, amorah@amorah.com.