

RELATIONAL COACHING

because a cord of three strands is not easily broken



To Counsel or to Coach... That is the Question!

An interactive exploration
with Richard Morrison

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A bit about me ...

I live & work in Newcastle.

I'm a Baptist minister,
but I now play on a wider stage.

I would love to see ...
the world more like the church,
and the church more like the world.

(in all the best ways, of course!)

I call my private practice “Coaching”.

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What we call ourselves matters!

to ourselves -

it helps with our sense of self,
our identity,

it may also shape what we do.

to our clients (and potential clients) -

it helps shape expectations,

it may lower barriers,

it may improve sense of self.

What did Jesus call his clients?

How might this have changed things for those involved?

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What we call ourselves doesn't matter!

- there is no perfect model,
- words like “counsellor”, “pastor”, “coach” are metaphors - different ways of describing helping,
- who we are and what we do is more important.

What did Jesus mean when he told his disciples to “be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” Matt. 10:16?

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All words have around them a range of meaning.

What are the range of meanings for the word “counsel”?

- Wise advice,
 - Work of the Holy Spirit,
 - Well known model of help for personal issues,
- But also
- Discipline in the workplace, and
 - Connotations of introversion and ineffectiveness.

Who do we want to help and what meaning will they take from the way we talk about what we do?

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What are the range of meanings for the word “coach”?

- Sports trainer and strategist,
- Also known in academic and business worlds,
- Helps with winning
- Often mentor of team

But also

- Life coaching can be faddish and shallow, and
- May lack professional status & qualities.

Who do we want to help and what meaning will they take from the way we talk about what we do?

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Questions to ponder ...

- In the light of who we want to help, which metaphor/s would suit them best?
- In the light of who we are as Jesus' helpers, which metaphor/s would suit us best?

What did St Paul mean when he said that he had "become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" 1 Cor.9:22?

How might this apply to us in our practice?

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Some of the interesting points to emerge in discussion included ...

- Sports teams now employing ‘counsellors’ as well as coaches.
- Counsellors reflect and sport coaches use video replay to help people see themselves differently.
- Not sure if I would have to change my practice if I changed to call myself a coach?
- Gender differences include women being more ready to seek counselling than men.
- One way of thinking about different styles or types of help is to graph “Care” and “Cure”.

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Thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to a stimulating discussion.

May your practice be anchored deep in God and honed for our world.

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