SPIRITUAL GROWTH: AN EXPLORATION OF “RADICAL COACHING”
AT GRACE COVENANT WORSHIP CENTER

by

CLEO MARK BOYD

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
of the James & Carolyn McAfee School of Theology
at Mercer University
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Atlanta, GA
2019
SPIRITUAL GROWTH: AN EXPLORATION OF “RADICAL COACHING”

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CLEO MARK BOYD

Approved:

_________________________ Date ________________
Denise Massey, Ph.D.
Faculty Supervisor

_________________________ Date ________________
Joel Snider, Ph.D.
Ministry Coach

_________________________ Date ________________
Leon Reese, D.Min.
Reader

_________________________ Date ________________
Graham B. Walker, Jr, Ph.D.
Interim Associate Dean, D. Min. Degree Program, James & Carolyn McAfee School of Theology

_________________________ Date ________________
C. Gregory DeLoach, D.Min.
Interim Dean, James & Carolyn McAfee School of Theology
DEDICATION

Dedicated to Rev. Buford and Martha Tanner, who welcomed me into their family over forty years ago by allowing me the honor of marrying their daughter, Ellen. You have been my faithful prayer partners, my mentors in ministry, and my best friends. You have demonstrated the love of God to me, my children, and grandchildren. Thank you for your investment in my life and family.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over forty years ago, God gave me this most incredible bride. Ellen, you have faithfully stood by my side through the years offering your love, words of encouragement, and prayers. The completion of this study would not have been possible if not for your support. As I often tell others, you are the most Christ-like person that I have ever met. Thank you for being you!

My amazing children and grandchildren also are deserving of their involvement in the study. Many times when I considered abandoning the dream of completing a doctoral degree, your inspiration, unwavering belief in me, prayers, and encouraging words have caused me to renew the pursuit of my dream. Thank you for being you!

This study would not have been possible without the support of pastors Alex and Jill Montgomery. Your encouragement and willingness to allow Grace Covenant Worship Center to be the context for the exploration of the Radical Coaching process testifies to your belief in and support of those who are pursuing an experiential journey of intimacy with God. Thank you for being you!

Four amazing clients volunteered to participate in this study. Our coaching sessions have forever united our faith journeys. Each of you has added significant value to my life and have become family to me. Thank you for being you!

Five years ago, my friend, Lee Reese encouraged me to explore the Doctor of Ministry degree program at McAfee School of Theology. Throughout my study at
McAfee, Lee has been my cheerleader, advisor, and resource to improve my learning experience. Lee, thank you for being you!

My faculty advisor, Dr. Denise Massey, and ministry coach, Dr. Joel Snider, have been my mentors, guides, and encouragers throughout the degree program. On numerous occasions, you asked timely, strategic questions that caused me to listen more attentively to the Voice Within. You have demonstrated coaching and inner listening that have truly been life-changing for me. Thank you for being you!

Finally, the study would not have been possible were it not for the Voice Within birthing the creation and design of the Radical Coaching process in me, guiding in the design of the conversational flow, enabling me to put the Radical Coaching concept into practice, and encouraging me along the way. Thank you for being you!
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ABSTRACT

CLEO MARK BOYD
SPIRITUAL GROWTH: AN EXPLORATION OF “RADICAL COACHING” AT GRACE COVENANT WORSHIP CENTER
Under the direction of DR. DENISE MASSEY, Ph.D.

Many Christians are experiencing stagnation in his or her movement through the stages of faith. Studies indicate that a significant number of church attendees are experiencing feelings of dissatisfaction in spiritual growth that might be the result of an inner wall or gap that is hindering development. The Radical Coaching process was created and designed with the goal of facilitating a renewed sense of satisfaction in faith development. This study measures how the Radical Coaching process affected the self-perception of spiritual growth in clients who were coached using the Radical Coaching conversational flow.

A qualitative methodology was used in the study. Four clients, who attend Grace Covenant Worship Center, were coached for six sessions over three months to measure the effectiveness of the Radical Coaching process to facilitate a self-perception of progressive faith development. Clients participated in semi-structured entrance and exit interviews to allow participants to give his or her insights and perceptions of spiritual growth and the success of the Radical Coaching process.

Clients responses indicate that the Radical Coaching process is beneficial in promoting feelings of satisfaction in spiritual growth. All four clients stated that
participation in the coaching process increased her or his ability to discern the Voice Within and create effective action plans for faith development. Clients stated a renewed self-perception of satisfaction with his or her movement in spiritual growth and stated a desire to participate in further Radical Coaching sessions should the opportunity be offered.

Further study should be conducted in using the Radical Coaching conversational flow in other contexts inside and outside of the church. Radical Coaching may be incorporated into the discipleship efforts of the church as well as leadership development. Contexts outside of the church, such as business, executive leadership training, and education could be opportunities for further study of how Radical Coaching can facilitate forward movement in growth.
CHAPTER 1
SPIRITUAL GROWTH ENCOUNTERS RADICAL COACHING

Introduction

Many Christians today are experiencing stagnation in spiritual growth as they discover that church participation is not a guarantee of adequate faith development. Instead, these church attendees are feeling a disconnection in their growth that might be described as an inner “wall” or “gap” that is hindering spiritual growth. The self-perception of dissatisfaction in spiritual growth has resulted in some people abandoning church participation and others becoming infrequent in church attendance. Still, other persons have chosen to remain faithful in church attendance despite feeling like their advancement in spiritual growth has slowed or stopped altogether.

The issue of feeling stagnation in faith development is personal for the researcher. Several years ago, I went through a season in my life where I seemed to encounter an inner wall that blocked my spiritual development. The distress of these feelings was particularly intense because of my role as a pastor who had the responsibility to preach each week in such a manner as to encourage hearers to advance toward greater spiritual development. Sermon preparation became a chore rather than an inspiring adventure with God. Pastoral responsibilities such as ministering to the distressed, sick, and hurting became more of a learned performance than a spiritually-enriching endeavor. While many congregants seemed to appreciate my efforts in speaking and serving, inside I felt
like I was similar to the hollow chocolate rabbit available in stores at Easter. My ministry calling required my continuing church participation, but inwardly the gap in my faith development left me feeling empty and alone.

When I shared these feelings with a retired minister that I considered a mentor, he commented that all pastors go through these seasons. Instead of asking timely, strategic questions that might have challenged me to look inward and listen to the “Voice Within” in order to chart a new self-determined action plan for continuing spiritual growth, his advice was to maintain my discipline in reading the Bible, praying, diligently preparing sermons, and ministering to congregants in the anticipation that the season of inner dissatisfaction would dissipate. What if the retired minister had chosen to converse with me using a different approach, a coaching approach that would have facilitated self-directed movement, instead of attempting to “fix” a younger minister with the retired minister’s action plan? Could my perceived inner wall have been breached? Could the season of inner stagnation have been shortened? What if my valued retired minister friend had been trained to serve others using a ministry coaching approach? Could experiencing a coaching conversation benefit church attendees who are feeling dissatisfied in their faith development? As this project has demonstrated, I believe the answer is “yes.”

Coaching, a seldom-used practice in most churches, offers a promising approach to facilitating spiritual growth. *Spiritual Growth: An Exploration of “Radical Coaching”*
at Grace Covenant Worship Center\textsuperscript{1} explores the concept of coaching from biblical, theological, and historical perspectives and considers coaching as a methodology to facilitate such maturity. With coaching’s focus on facilitating forward movement in the person being coached, the Radical Coaching process offers hope for persons who feel stalled in their spiritual growth.

Description of the Ministerial Context

Grace Covenant Worship Center (GCWC), a non-denominational church located in Hogansville, Georgia, is a faith community that is racially, ethnically, economically, religiously and educationally diverse.\textsuperscript{2} Racially, parishioners are predominately Caucasian with increasing African-American participation. Ethnically, congregants include individuals with Latino, Caribbean, European, and African lineage. Economically, the majority of parishioners are blue-collar workers with the minority employed in white-collar type occupations. Educationally, the average participant has a high school diploma with some college or technical school experience. Religiously, the majority of congregants come from a Pentecostal or Charismatic tradition, but the church also has many worshipers who come from Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, and other Christian faith traditions. Typical ministry activities at GCWC include Sunday morning worship, midweek discipleship-focused Bible study, periodic small group

\textsuperscript{1} The “Radical Coaching” model is my own creation. An explanation of the “Radical Coaching” model will be given later in the chapter.

\textsuperscript{2} Finer detail about Grace Covenant Worship Center of Hogansville is given in Chapter 3.
opportunities, local mission outreach events, and life counseling availability for adults, youth, and children. Average weekly attendance at the Sunday morning worship service is 125-150 attendees. The church’s ministerial staff includes a full-time pastor and several part-time staff that serve in various ministry areas, such as worship, counseling, missions, and clerical support.

I have no formal ministry role at GCWC. Occasionally, I attend Sunday worship services, a special event, or serve as a guest speaker when requested. In previous years, I have spoken several times on requested topics at the church’s Sunday morning worship. I have also taught at some of the church’s midweek bible study and discipleship opportunities. My family and I regularly attend and serve at Summit Church in Newnan, Georgia.

Dissatisfaction in Spiritual Growth

Numerous studies, such as the Reveal³ and Move⁴ studies, indicate that a significant number of church attendees are feeling a sense of dissatisfaction between church participation and spiritual growth development. An inner wall or knowledge-behavior gap caused spiritual growth to slow or become static for these attendees.⁵ For


⁵ An inner wall refers to a person being hindered in progression through stages of faith development. The concept of encountering an inner wall, also referred to as a
example, after a three-year Reveal study involving 6,000 church participants at Willow Creek Church of South Barrington, Illinois, researchers discovered that 25% of the membership of the church felt that they were stalled or dissatisfied with their spiritual growth. In a follow-up and expanded Move survey that involved over 250,000 people from over 1,000 churches of diverse evangelical faith traditions, researchers again discovered that 1 out of 4 congregants was dissatisfied or stalled with their spiritual growth.

The Radical Coaching Conversational Flow

Coaching, with its priority of facilitating forward movement, is uniquely suited to help clients\(^6\) to acquire an increased perception of spiritual growth through experiencing the “Radical Coaching” process. The researcher designed the “Radical Coaching” model.\(^7\) The acronym “radical” explains this coaching model. In each coaching session, the coach will facilitate the following conversational flow illustrated in Figure 1.

\(^6\) In the literature, several terms are used for individuals who experience coaching. These terms include the person being coached (PBC), coachee, or client. In this research, the person being coached will be identified by the term “client.”

\(^7\) John Whitmore’s “GROW Coaching” model influenced the design of the “Radical Coaching model. Whitmore’s coaching model is an established coaching model used in leadership, business, and education for over twenty-five years. Contribution from other sources specifically related to coaching within the context of Christian ministry will be identified later in Chapter 2.
R  Relationship– the coach’s goal is to facilitate a sense of relationship in the client to include God, self, family, and church through the use of open-ended questions.

A  Assessment – the goal is to use open-ended and scaling questions\textsuperscript{8} with the client to identify a self-perception of the quality of these relationships as they relate to spiritual growth.

D  Determine – the coach’s goal is to use open-ended questions with the client to determine the specific subject in connection with spiritual growth that the client desires to explore in the coaching session.

I  Investigate – the coach’s goal is to use open-ended questions with the client to identify the scope of options available for achieving a self-perceived sense of forward movement in keeping with the direction that the client has chosen for the coaching session.

C  Clarity – the coach’s goal is to restate and confirm the assessment, direction, and the options the client chooses or has chosen and ask open-ended questions to clarify specific steps and develop an action plan for forward movement in relation to the subject chosen for the coaching session.

A  Accountability – the coach’s goal is to ask open-ended questions to review the action plans as the client states or has stated, identify the answers to how, when, where, and who questions related to the action steps, facilitate the creation of an accountability plan for implementing the action plan and to identify and explore potential obstacles to accomplishing the action plan and how to overcome possible roadblocks.

L  Live it out – the coach’s goal is to restate the client’s self-determined action plan, accountability steps, potential obstacles and method to overcome them, to use scaling questions facilitating the client’s commitment to live out the action plan after the coaching session ends.

\textit{Figure 1: RADICAL Coaching Model}

\textsuperscript{8} Scaling questions are questions that ask for a response by choosing a number from a range of numbers. Scaling questions are useful in helping a client to clarify his or her’s feelings, impressions, perceptions, observations, and predictions regarding an issue. In this study, rather than the more traditional 1-5 scale or the 5 to 7 Likert scale, I am using a 1-10 scale, with 1 indicating the lowest and 10 the highest level, to give clients more room to differentiate answers.
Research Methods

Structure of the Project

From October 1 through December 31, 2018, I coached four clients who attend GCWC. Each client participated in six, one-on-one, sixty-minute coaching sessions conducted on a semi-monthly schedule. Each coaching session followed the “Radical Coaching” conversational flow. All of the coaching sessions were client-driven in terms of general content and selected topic. During each session, clients created a self-determined action plan using the Action Plan Worksheet (Appendix C) related to the selected topic in relation to their spiritual growth. In coaching sessions 1 and 6, each client participated in a semi-structured interview at the beginning of the conversation. After each coaching session, I wrote observation notes that included my perception of the client’s level of active participation in the session, comments about the flow of conversation in the session, and other information deemed applicable to the study.

Clients Involved in the Project

The Pastor of GCWC compiled a list of potential clients without any written or verbal announcements to the church. The researcher selected four potential clients from the list. Each potential client received a phone call from the Pastor inviting them to an introductory meeting in the Pastor’s office on October 3, 2018 (see Appendix D for

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9 All coaching sessions and interviews were conducted by video conference using Zoom. Coaching sessions and interviews were recorded using the Zoom recording tool. Clients were sent a Zoom hyperlink to connect with the researcher/coach and were responsible for their own device to connect for each coaching session. For more information about Zoom, go to https://zoom.us/.
Introductory Meeting Agenda) to meet the researcher, learn details about the project, ask questions, and to review and complete an Informed Consent document (Appendix B). Age, gender identification, race, ethnicity, economic status, educational level, and perceived stage of faith development were not considered in client selection. A potential client’s openness and desire for spiritual growth, willingness to commit to the entirety of the three-month study, and access to a computer, phone, or other technological device with internet capability were considered in client selection for the study. All four of those invited to the meeting agreed to participate and completed the informed consent document.

One of the original four clients contacted the researcher on October 7, 2018 and requested to be removed from the study due to a work-related issue. The researcher selected a new potential client from the Pastor’s list of potential participants, contacted the client by phone, and conducted an introductory meeting in the client’s home on October 10, 2018. The new client agreed to participate and completed the informed consent document.

Rationale for the Project

Through the coaching sessions and the entrance and exit interviews with each client, I explored the significance of the Radical Coaching conversational process in relation to the client’s perception of satisfaction in spiritual growth. The semi-structured entrance interview (Appendix E) with each client was necessary to gain an understanding of the client’s perception of spiritual growth prior to coaching, learn what actions were
already being taken by the client for faith development, and to discover the client’s self-perceived level of satisfaction with their current rate of growth. In each of the coaching sessions, scaling questions were asked to determine the client’s level of satisfaction with their current rate of forward movement in spiritual growth. Client-determined action plans created in each coaching session provided insight about the direction, topics, self-determined action steps taken by each client for effectiveness in increasing the client’s degree of satisfaction with faith development. The semi-structured exit interview (Appendix F) revisited the same questions asked in the entrance interview but added additional questions to learn his or her satisfaction with their growth over the three-month study after experiencing the Radical Coaching conversational process. The rationale for this strategy was to learn the impact of the Radical Coaching process upon the client’s perception of faith development.

Because the data desired was personal in nature and gathered from the context of a local church where the clients were exposed to faith development, a qualitative study approach was selected as the best research method. Rather than an investigation based on structured scientific empirical data, an approach was needed that aligned with coaching’s strategy of talking with people using face-to-face interaction. A qualitative approach also allows for the uniqueness of clients’ choices in determining his or her path of forward movement in spiritual growth.

Measurement of the Project
I interviewed each client at the beginning of coaching session 1 to examine clients’ personal understanding of spiritual growth instead of a definition for spiritual growth determined by others. Open-ended questions were asked to receive clarification of his or her initial response to the definition of spiritual growth. Additional open-ended questions were asked to learn if clients had experienced stagnation in faith development, the length of being hindered in growth, and what steps were taken to facilitate advancement in spiritual growth during that season in life. The interview concluded with scaling questions asked to ascertain the clients’ perception of his or her current satisfaction with faith development. The use of the entrance interview was to “paint” a backdrop of where clients saw themselves in spiritual growth prior to experiencing the Radical Coaching process.

From October to December 2018, I conducted six coaching sessions with each client using the Radical Coaching conversational process in each session. Client determined subjects, topics, and action plans were created as open-ended and scaling questions were posed to the client during each session. The use of these types of questions was intended to encourage, entrust, and empower each client to listen to the indwelling Holy Spirit as the “Voice Within” that knows the best direction to move in pursuit of a greater sense of satisfaction in spiritual growth. Implementation of the action plans by the client was intended to foster a sense of self-confidence in the client’s ability to adopt actions that would foster a continuing sense of spiritual development.
In the final December 2018 coaching session with clients, I conducted an exit interview to learn the change in her or his perception of spiritual growth, the degree of satisfaction with movement in spiritual growth after participating in the coaching sessions, and to determine his or her perception of the effectiveness of the Radical Coaching process to facilitate faith development. Using open-ended and scaling questions, data thick enough to analyze was gathered from the clients to learn and analyze her or his thoughts and feelings without interference from the researcher.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The project has been limited by the number of clients involved. Generalizations based on the project research should be avoided until additional study has been completed involving a larger sample size. Data, analysis, and interpretations were limited to the clients involved with the project.

Another limitation of the project was the selection process for clients. Clients were selected by the researcher in consultation with the Pastor of GCWC. Selected clients may not have been representative of GCWC as a whole.

A final limitation of the project was the modality of video conferencing for interviews and coaching sessions. While video conferencing is a face-to-face encounter between individuals, some people may feel uncomfortable, at least initially, with this modality. The researcher/coach is proficient in the use of video conferencing due to employment as an instructional support technician and instructor at a Christian university and worked to create a sense of personal connection during each video session.
A delimiting factor was that I have not attempted to determine the person’s stage of faith development as part of the coaching process. The place where an inner wall has been encountered or is being experienced while moving through the various stages of faith is unique to an individual. There may be some commonality among clients as to the location of the wall; however, formulating and analyzing that information will need to be the focus of a follow-up study.

Another delimiting aspect of the project was that no effort is made to study the reason why clients chose to incorporate some spiritual disciplines, while disregarding other disciplines, in their action plans. Spiritual disciplines were not the focus of the project. Instead, this project focused on whether or not the use of the “Radical Coaching” model influenced the client’s perception of growth in spiritual maturity.

Terms and Assumptions

Terms

Spiritual Growth -- Spiritual growth is the movement in the Inner Person uniquely experienced in response to the activity of the indwelling Holy Spirit (the Voice Within). At the foundation of spiritual growth is a personal, intimate relationship with God through faith in Jesus that is ongoing, resulting in a gradual transformation within a Christian until Jesus' life becomes fully developed in the believer (Gal 4:19). The progression of personal spiritual growth begins with becoming interested in Christ,

continues through stages of faith development, and culminates with Christ becoming the center of life.\textsuperscript{11} This movement includes information, application, and personal transformation that leads to spiritual maturity. Loughlan Sofield has stated that spiritual maturity is best described as “a journey, a personal, daily, unique and satisfying but disciplined journey. The goal of the journey is to move closer to becoming everything God has created one to be.”\textsuperscript{12}

In this project, spiritual growth is the self-perception of spiritual advancement leading to spiritual maturity. Matthew Meyer identifies seven criteria that offer evidence of spiritual growth: (1) the Christian’s ability to sense the “Divine Presence”; (2) the believer’s ability to commune and communicate with God; (3) growth in self-perception of an experiential oneness with God; (4) an increasing self-awareness of becoming more like Jesus in character, attitude, and actions; (5) the Christian’s increasing ability to view and experience life from a higher perspective; (6) a growing ability to find life vibrant and rewarding; and, (7) an expanding capacity to give and receive love.\textsuperscript{13} Progressive movement through the stages of spiritual growth typically involves some of the


established spiritual disciplines of the church, including prayer, meditation, fasting, submission, solitude, silence, service, and worship.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Coaching} -- Coaching is the process a coach uses to facilitate the movement of individuals, groups, or institutions from where they are to where they want to be. Coaching involves asking a client strategic, timely, open-ended questions that are non-coercive and help the client to determine and implement actions that accomplish the client’s self-determined goals. According to Coe, Zehnder, and Kinlaw,

\begin{quote}
Coaching is a way to develop people so that they can achieve superior performance and commitment to sustained growth and positive relationships. It is the process of helping people discover creative solutions to complex situations. Coaching provides a safe environment for identifying opportunities and making them a reality.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

By having a forward-focused approach that seeks to facilitate self-directed and self-designed movement in and by the client, coaching has the potential of a synergistic relationship with spiritual growth as both practices work toward progression by establishing and achieving goals.

Assumptions

There were several assumptions related to the project. The first assumption involved the competency of the coach. Because the researcher was also the coach in the


project, it was assumed that the coach would be able to effectively engage the clients in the conversational flow of the “Radical Coaching” model. The researcher has completed DMIN 702 and DMIN 703 “Coaching for Spiritual Growth” and DMIN 740, DMIN 741, and DMIN 742 “Ministry Coaching I, II, and III” at McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University. Also, the researcher has experience in the use of a coaching methodology with students in a one-on-one and group setting at Point University. A second assumption was that each of the clients participating in the project possessed a desire to grow spiritually, even if they currently felt a sense of spiritual stagnation. A final assumption of the project was that each of the clients would be faithful in attendance and would actively participate in each of the coaching sessions and interviews.

Purpose and Significance

By studying the responses of clients who were involved in the Radical Coaching process, I wanted to understand the potential coaching has to impact the self-perception of satisfaction in movement through the stages of faith development. My hope was that clients would feel empowered and inspired to pursue spiritual growth. In relation to experiencing an inner wall or gap in advancing to the next stage of faith, my hope was that the learned practice of listening to the Voice Within (the Holy Spirit) through exposure to the Radical Coaching conversational flow would foster self-confidence in
clients to create an action plan to breach the wall or gap without becoming static in their growth.\textsuperscript{16}

This research adds to the scholarship of the subject of spiritual growth by demonstrating that a synergistic relationship between coaching and faith development is possible. Many people assume that feelings of spiritual stagnation can best be addressed through increased church participation. While church involvement has significant value in spiritual development and should be encouraged, as this study indicates, coaching can also play a vital role in advancing spiritual growth.

Other churches and Christians at large can benefit from this study. While there are other factors involved in declining church participation, this study can provide a new approach that might slow the number of parishioners abandoning church involvement or feeling a sense of dissatisfaction while attending. The Radical Coaching model can be a powerful approach in facilitating faith development in one-on-one or group settings in the church. Timely, strategically open-ended and scaling questions along with active listening skills for tuning in to one’s Voice Within can move individuals within the church and may also be helpful in facilitating faith advancement in the church as a whole. As the results from this study indicate, the Radical Coaching conversational flow can help to foster a sense of empowerment, inspiration, and movement through the stages of faith leading to maturity.

\textsuperscript{16} Chapter 5 will provide greater detail about the conclusions of the study and the significance for the wider faith community.
CHAPTER 2

FOUNDATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND COACHING

Spiritual Growth

The foundation for Christian spiritual growth is an extensive one with roots in the biblical record continuing throughout church history into the modern era. From the earliest days of humankind’s interaction with God, spiritual growth has been a significant aspect of the human story. Various terms have been used in the context of spiritual growth, but the significance of growth has always been an essential value in Christianity.\(^1\) The foundation for this project will touch on several terms but will focus primarily on the faith development aspect of spiritual growth.

Designed for Growth

Growth is a normal aspect of life. Plants and animals are designed by the Creator to grow. When a seed is planted, the expectation is that the seed will produce a plant that grows to maturity. When a baby is born, the expectation is that the child will grow to be an adult. The expectation of growth includes all ages and areas of life. Growth is anticipated as a person continues to progress through various stages leading to maturity.

In the context of Jesus’ growth, Luke states that Jesus increased in both wisdom and

\(^1\) Some of the more modern terms include discipleship, spiritual formation, faith development, spiritual disciplines, spiritual maturity, and Christian spirituality.
stature, while also increasing in favor with God and humanity (Luke 2:52). Jesus, the Son of God, was designed for growth after He became flesh (John 1:14); therefore, the expectation of progressive movement is well-established theologically.

In both of his letters, Peter admonished readers to be active in growing their faith (1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 1:5-6, 3:18). Likewise, Paul saw growth as a natural aspect of faith (Eph 4:15; Col 1:10; 1 Thes 3:12, 4:10). The writer of Hebrews also challenged readers to progress to spiritual maturity (Heb 6:1).

Examples of spiritual growth in persons in the biblical record abound, including Abraham, Joseph, David, and Paul. A good example of one whose life evidenced significant growth was Peter. From his earliest days as a fisherman, known as Simon, on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 4:18-19) to becoming the spokesman, known as Peter, for the followers of Jesus on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter’s character, words, and actions demonstrated a progression of growth. Jesus, seeing the potential in Simon, selected him as one of his disciples and renamed the fisherman “Peter,” a name associated with a rock-like spirituality (Matt 16:18; John 1:42). Despite Peter’s impulsiveness to speak (Matt 16:21-23; 17:3-5) or act without listening attentively to Jesus (John 18:10), Jesus knew that Peter’s faith would mature. Evidence that Jesus’ confidence was well-placed is the role that Peter had in the early church as the chief spokesperson of the Gospel, especially in Jewish contexts (Acts 3:11-26; 4:8-12). Peter’s character and faith development demonstrate that growth, including spiritual growth, is a typical aspect of life.
Stages of Faith

Christian faith development involves the study of how faith progresses through a series of stages to maturity. The numbering and naming of the stages of faith differ among researchers; however, there is agreement that faith maturity involves movement. Stages of Faith Ministries,² Founder, Don Willett, using the paradigm of 1 John 2:12-14, has posed that faith progresses through the three stages of childhood, young adulthood, and parenthood.³ Researchers involved in the Reveal study, mentioned earlier in this chapter, have concluded that the movement of faith involves four stages: (1) exploring Christianity, (2) growing in Christ, (3) drawing close to Christ, and (4) becoming Christ-centered.⁴ Other researchers, such as Janet Hagberg, Robert Guelich, Peter Scazzero, and James Fowler have determined that faith development advances through six stages, but differ in the naming of the stages.⁵ Despite these differences among researchers, there is a consensus that faith maturity involves movement through stages of growth.⁶

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² For more information about Stages of Faith Ministries, Inc. see http://stagesoffaith.com.


Inner Wall or Gap

Movement through the stages of faith is not always an easy endeavor. While there are similarities in the journey of spiritual maturity as indicated in the stages of faith mentioned earlier, there are also unique aspects that distinguish each person’s path. The uniqueness is easily recognizable when Christians share their faith stories. Some people began their spiritual journey during childhood. For others, the awareness of their spiritual journey began during their teenage years. For still others, the starting point for their faith development was initiated at differing stages of adulthood. Each Christian’s movement in faith development is personal, meaning that each person’s journey has aspects that are specific to the individual taking the faith journey. For some people, their progression through the stages of faith development is aided by involvement in church life, while others are hindered in their faith advancement through exposure to a toxic church environment. For others, experiencing difficult circumstances in life may have caused inner turmoil making it difficult to advance to the next stage of faith. Still others encounter such issues as physical or emotional suffering, hardships of various kinds, feelings of alienation from broken relationships, displacement caused by relocation due to a job change, or a lack of consistency in practicing spiritual disciplines that aid faith

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6 Additional sources concerning faith development include Perry Downs’ *Teaching for Spiritual Growth*, Howard Hendricks’ *Exit Interviews*, Peter Scazzero’s *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, and Tom Ashbrook’s *Mansions of the Heart*. 
development. The path to spiritual maturity has many unique details among Christians, but every person’s journey has the potential for pitfalls that threaten faith development.

The idea of a hindrance or “sticking point” — an inner wall or gap — is an accepted concept in the literature. Hagberg and Guelich define the wall in faith development as the point where a person’s will encounters God’s will requiring a decision as to whether to surrender to God’s direction in life or remain in a self-directed stage of faith.7 When a Christian chooses not to submit to God, the Christian’s faith advancement is stalled or digresses to a previous stage of faith. Scazzero agrees with the concept of an inner wall in the movement through the stages of faith but differs with Hagberg and Guelich about the point where the wall is typically experienced as a person navigates the stages.8

The concept of a wall or gap in relation to deeper levels of learning is not exclusive to the subject of faith development. In the field of education, researchers Benjamin Bloom and associates created a framework in 1956 to confront a perceived gap in student learning, commonly known as “Bloom’s Taxonomy” for understanding the progression required to move students to a deeper level of learning than the acquisition of information.9 Bloom proposed that students need to progress through the stages of


8 Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 119.

knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation for lifelong learning to take place.\textsuperscript{10} Researchers Robert Marzano and John Kendall, in a later study, concluded that the students’ experience of a knowledge-behavior gap remains a relevant concern for educators.\textsuperscript{11}

The potential, if not the probability, of experiencing an inner wall is typical. In the context of spiritual growth, this potential for an inner wall calls for an approach that offers hope for facilitating advancement through the stages of faith. Coaching offers that hope but is dependent upon the recognition of “the Voice Within” each Christian.

The Voice Within

Speaking metaphorically, Jesus said to his followers, “My sheep listen to my voice” (John 10:27). Before Jesus’s arrest, trial, and crucifixion, he announced to his followers that after his death, the Holy Spirit would come to live with and in the believer (John 7:38-39; 14:17; 15:7). Jesus later explained that an aspect of the purpose of the Holy Spirit would be to guide His followers into all truth (John 14:26; 16:12-15). After Jesus’ ascension and the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Paul declared to the


Corinthian Christians that their body was “a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you” (1 Cor 6:19). According to Jesus, the Holy Spirit has come to live within the Christian as a Counselor (Helper) and as a guide to living a righteous and purposeful life. The Holy Spirit is God’s Voice Within every Christian.

Christian coaches are not a substitute for the Voice Within. Instead, the Christian coach functions to enhance the client’s perception of what God is doing and how the client can join God in that work by asking timely questions that encourage inner reflection in order to hear God’s voice. Underlying this aspect of the coach’s role is the assumption that God is already at work in the life of the client and her surroundings just as God was at work in Jesus and his surroundings (John 5:17-19) and that God is committed to completing that work in her (Phil 1:6).

Coaching

“Coach” and “coaching” are words that can have varied meaning and significance among individuals. Originally, “coach” referred to a vehicle used to transport people from one location to another. According to Webster’s New World Dictionary, the first definition of “coach” is “a large, covered, four-wheeled carriage used as a conveyance, with seats for passengers inside and an open raised seat in front for the driver:

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stagecoach.” Today “coach” is used in a variety of settings, such as a description of a passenger’s seating aboard a commercial airplane, a person employed to foster leadership development within a corporation or an individual who is responsible for helping another reach their fitness goals. While “coach” is still associated with movement, the word is most often associated with athletics. In sports, a coach is a person who has the responsibilities of command and control of the team or an aspect of the team. Ministers and coaches Mike McGervey and Tim Cosby describe athletic coaches as being often characterized as having a leadership method that is “in-your-face, I’ll tell you what to do and how to do it, my way or the highway style.” Unfortunately, when one poses the idea of using coaching in relation to faith development, many envision the same command and control concept as used in sports by adopting what has been called by McGervey and Cosby as “the ‘spray and pray’ approach – spray as much information and advice on the wall as you can and pray that something will stick.” If “coaching” is used to identify this type of approach in ministry, this strategy does not accurately reflect the art of coaching. In light of the varied perception of “coaching” a more detailed


15 Ibid., 24.
understanding of coaching is required to grasp the significance of the kind of coaching being used in this project.

History of Coaching

Coaching in the context of corporate training has its roots in the innovative coaching techniques developed by tennis coach Timothy Gallwey in the mid-1970’s. His approach to coaching tennis was based on the principles of awareness, choice, and trust. Gallwey stated that “awareness was about knowing the present situation with clarity…choice was about moving in a desired direction in the future…and trust in one’s own inner resources was the essential link that enabled that movement.”16 Instead of focusing on teaching players to conform to the techniques and strategies of other players, Gallwey believed that each player’s full potential could be accessed by the coach asking strategic questions of the player. These questions were designed to increase the awareness of the player on the court with the belief that the player had an inner knowledge and ability to make appropriate choices to improve performance.

Among the tennis players that Gallwey coached were many in the business arena, including John Whitmore. From his experience with Gallwey, Whitmore, among other players, realized that the same coaching technique could be profitable in the corporate world. After implementing Gallwey’s principles of awareness, choice, and trust in the context of business and executive leadership, Whitmore authored a classic coaching text,

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Coaching for Performance, which has been used extensively in the field of business providing a definition of coaching, offering a basic understanding of coaching methodology, and an exploration of the psychological roots of coaching.¹⁷ Later books such as Goldsmith, Lyons, and McArthur’s Coaching for Leadership, a collection of essays written by respected business and leadership coaches, offers a philosophical understanding of coaching as well as practical guidelines for including coaching in various leadership contexts.¹⁸ Today, resources related to enhancing performance proficiency through executive and leadership coaching are abundant expanding on Gallwey and Whitmore’s contribution to coaching.¹⁹

Gary Collins introduced coaching into the Christian arena in 2001 with his book Christian Coaching in which he explained how the discipline of coaching could effectively be used in navigating life issues, such as career and skill development, relationship building, setting and reaching goals, as well as faith development.²⁰ Collins

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¹⁹ Examples of additional resources reviewed by the researcher include Thomas G. Crane’s The Heart of Coaching; Cindy Coe, Amy Zehnder and Dennis Kinlaw’s Coaching for Commitment; Stephen Neale, Lisa Spencer-Arnell, and Liz Wilson’s Emotional Intelligence Coaching, Daniel Harkavy’s Becoming a Coaching Leader; Serena Richards’ Performance Coaching; and Myles Downey’s Effective Coaching.

was first exposed to the idea of incorporating coaching into spiritual development through the work of Christopher McCluskey, a therapist who moved to life coaching as a ministry to help people “find God’s vision for their lives and learn to live accordingly.” McCluskey closed his therapy practice, moved to a different region of the United States and continues to offer Christian coaching using phone, email, video, and internet modalities. In summing up the role of a Christian coach, Collins has stated, “In working with others, coaches help people clarify their calling, discover their visions, and take steps to reach the goals God appears to have put into their lives.” Others, following in the path of McCluskey and Collins, have offered extensive resources about Christian coaching, primarily in the context of leadership and character development. Christian coach Tony Stoltfuz has authored several significant coaching resources that focus on the core values, foundational principles, and essential skills for effective coaching from a

21 Ibid., chap 1 par 33, Kindle ed.

22 For more information about McCluskey’s coaching, see https://professionalchristiancoaching.com.

23 Collins, chap 1, par 38, Kindle ed.

24 Other faith-based coaching resources reviewed by the researcher include Rochelle Melander’s A Generous Presence, Mike McGervey and Tim Crosby’s Coaching Based Ministry, J. Val Hastings’ The Next Great Awakening, Laura Beth Jones’ Jesus Life Coach, Mark Tidsworth and Ircel Harrison’s Disciple Development Coaching, Keith Webb’s The Coach Model for Christian Leaders, Steve Ogne & Tim Roehl’s TransforMissional Coaching, Chad Hall, Bill Cooper and Kathryn McElveen’s Faith Coaching, Edward H. Hammett and James R. Pierce’s Making Shifts Without Making Waves, Val Hastings’ Ministry 3.0, Jane Creswell’s Christ-Centered Coaching, and Linda J. Miller and Chad W. Hall’s Coaching for Christian Leaders.
faith-based perspective as well as a practice of using coaching skills in the context of spiritual formation.  

Coaching in the context of business, leadership, and education is continuing to increase in popularity. While coaching in the Christian world lags behind in usage, there is an increasing interest in exploring the role coaching can play in the church, Christian organizations, and for individual Christians. Whatever the context, the development of new coaching approaches, techniques, and resources will continue to emerge and play a significant part in all areas of life.

Foundational Principles

In order to successfully build a safe structure, such as a house, a key element in construction is to establish a solid foundation. Without a solid foundation, a structure may appear adequate for a short time, but will not be safe to inhabit over time (Matthew 7:24-27). There are three coaching principles that are essential for building effective coaching relationships that will result in spiritual growth.

Principle 1: Client-Driven

One of the significant principles of coaching centers on the question, “Who sets the agenda?” The distinction of this coaching principle can best be understood in the context of a comparison with mentoring, teaching, and counseling.

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25 Resources authored by Tony Stoltfuz that the researcher found to be helpful include *Leadership Coaching*, *The Invitation*, *Questions for Jesus*, *Christian Life Coaching Handbook*, *The Calling Journey*, and *A Leader’s Life Purpose Workbook*. Stoltfuz also is a contributor to www.coach22.com (Coaching training resources) and www.metaformation.com (Using coaching in spiritual formation).
TABLE 1. Coaching Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Counseling</th>
<th>Coaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Passing wisdom and experience to another person</td>
<td>Sharing new knowledge or skill with another person</td>
<td>Seeking to help another person experience healing from hurts</td>
<td>Developing another person through self-discovery and action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source of Expertise</strong></td>
<td>Wisdom of the mentor</td>
<td>Knowledge of the instructor</td>
<td>Knowledge and experience of the counselor</td>
<td>Expertise of the coach and the inner knowledge of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Past and present</td>
<td>Past and Present</td>
<td>Primarily the past</td>
<td>Present and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provider's Role</strong></td>
<td>The mentor is the wise expert who provides guidance</td>
<td>The teacher is the source of new information</td>
<td>The counselor is the guide to draw out information from the past</td>
<td>The coach is a spiritual companion who encourages the client to move forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who Does the Work?</strong></td>
<td>Primarily the mentor</td>
<td>Primarily the teacher</td>
<td>The counselor initially and later counselee</td>
<td>The client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relation to &quot;why&quot; Questions</strong></td>
<td>Used often to question why the mentoree is not following the advice given by the mentor</td>
<td>Asked occasionally by the teacher to gain the student's perspective</td>
<td>Asked often by the counselor to determine feelings and/or motives behind an action or thought</td>
<td>Almost never asked by the coach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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26 This chart is an adaptation of a chart found in Mark Tidsworth and Ircel Harrison’s *Disciple Development Coaching: Christian Formation for the 21st Century* (Macon: Nurturing Faith, 2013), 20-21.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider's method</th>
<th>Provides advice to the mentoree about what to do or not to do</th>
<th>Teaches new information for the proficiency of the student in the subject</th>
<th>Looks for emotional triggers to unresolved issues from the counselee's past</th>
<th>Asks timely questions intended to help clients determine their own solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In many relational disciplines, the leader sets the agenda. In discipleship, the one discipling chooses the content of the session with the learner. In mentoring, often the mentor sets the agenda for the mentoring session. In teaching, typically the instructor prepares and follows a lesson plan that determines the subject of the class. In a coaching relationship, it is the client that determines the agenda of the sessions. Coaching is “helping them to learn rather than teaching them.” Coaching is about assisting the client to discover a solution, not about giving the client answers. As educator Malcolm Knowles observed, “What adults learn on their own initiative they learn more keenly and permanently than what they learn by being ‘taught.’”

Instead of assuming the role of an expert, a coach is one who trusts that the client is capable of determining the best direction, answer, or solution to an issue. Coaches consider clients to be the experts on their lives and trust the clients to think, decide, and

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27 Whitmore, 16.


act. Underlying this principle is the coach’s belief that the Holy Spirit can be trusted to
guide and lead the client. The role of the coach is assisting clients to discern how God is
moving and guiding their lives.

Principle 2: Relation-Based

Another significant foundational principle in coaching is that coaching is relation-

based. Christian coaching is a three-person relationship: (1) the coach, (2) the client, and
(3) the Holy Spirit (the Voice Within). Coaching relationships are spiritual partnerships
that are empowering, energizing, and challenging to the participants. As life coach
Rochelle Melander has written, “As a coach, I’m simply a spiritual companion, a soul
friend, walking with other people on their journeys.”

The uniqueness of the coaching relationship can be stated in two words: (1)
“authentic,” and (2) “unconditional.” In coaching, it is the coach’s responsibility to set
the stage for genuine relationships by being open, transparent, and trustworthy with the
client. The practice of having different public and private faces is foreign to the
foundation of coaching where “who we are inside is who we are outside.”

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Skills for Solving Problems, Reaching Goals, and Developing Others (Bellevue, WA:
Active Results LLC, 2012), 57.

31 Stoltzfus, Leadership Coaching, 88.

32 Rochelle Melander, A Generous Presence: Spiritual Leadership and the Art of
Coaching (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006), 70.

33 Stoltzfus, Leadership Coaching, 88.
aspect of the coaching relationship is that it intends to be an unconditional relationship. In an unconditional relationship, the coach offers the client “full acceptance and unqualified belief…independent of performance.” The unconditional love and acceptance of the coach for the client imitates God’s unconditional love.

Principle 3: Goal-Driven

Everyone lives to achieve goals, whether those goals are unspoken, implicit, or stated. In many instances, people are pushed toward expectations that others have placed on them. In contrast, a key foundational principle in coaching is the belief that individuals move forward best when they are progressing toward goals that are meaningful and significant to them. McGervey and Cosby have stated, “The coach asks, ‘What would it mean for you to go from being pushed by the goals and expectations of others to being pulled by your own passions, interests, and goals?’” In coaching, it is the client’s responsibility to set goals. For a Christian client, “setting a goal is making a decisive choice to step out into the thing you feel God is asking you to do.” Goal setting is the process of “identifying what things look like (that is, what is the ideal or, in some cases, the best that can be hoped for) and to identify the gap between.”

34 Ibid., 90.
35 McGervey and Cosby, 11.
36 Stoltzfus, Leadership Coaching, 126.
37 Cindy Coe, Amy Zehnder, and Dennis C. Kinlaw, Coaching for Commitment: Achieving Superior Performance from Individuals and Teams (San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2008), 42.
where the client is and where the client wants to be is the performance gap. The role of the coach in the coaching conversation is to help the client to establish goals and action steps that will lead the client to bridge the performance gap. Stoltzfus has written that there are five reasons why being goal-driven is essential:

1. Clarity: A goal represents a decisive choice by the client to pursue a particular end.
2. Power: Declaring a goal unleashes God’s power on the client’s behalf.
3. Motivation: Visualizing the end results motivates the client to pursue a better future.
4. A Mandate: A goal gives you a clear picture of the client’s priorities, a mandate for how to focus your coaching conversations and boundaries to stay within.
5. Action: Clear goals make it easy to develop effective action steps. It’s hard to plan if you don’t know where you’re going!

Values of Coaching

A person’s values are a determining factor in how that individual approaches life. Values are the conscious or unconscious operating belief system from which a person makes decisions, forms opinions, and adopts behavioral patterns. Robert Stein, Professor Emeritus of New Testament at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has stated, “Where you start determines where you finish.” Consultant and coach Thomas Crane,

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39 Stoltzfus, Leadership Coaching, 129.

in his book *The Heart of Coaching*, has posed the following cycle: (1) beliefs determine behaviors, (2) behaviors influence relationships, (3) relationships affect results, and (4) results reinforce beliefs.\(^{41}\) Therefore, it is essential that the key values of coaching be identified, understood, and become part of the belief system of the one who practices coaching in relationships.

**Value 1: An Unconditional Belief in People**

One of the significant values of coaching is the choice to view others from God’s perspective. A coach sees others as made in the image of God and speaks truth based on the value that God places on each person.\(^{42}\) Coaching seeks “God’s image in the other person.”\(^ {43}\) As Rochelle Melander, a pastor and life coach, has stated,

> When we accept other people, we try to accept who they are (instead of who we desire them to be). We do not label or judge one another. We do not squeeze each other into categories or roles. We do not look to the other to be a mirror of ourselves. Instead, we look for the beauty that blooms inside of each person we encounter.\(^ {44}\)

Coaching chooses to see others as Jesus sees them, valuing each person for the fact that God’s image is in them and His Presence is also within each Christian in the person of the Holy Spirit. Stoltzfus reflects that the unconditional belief in each client in the coaching

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\(^{43}\) Melander, 29.

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
relationship empowers clients to reach higher, accomplish greater things, and become who God intended them to be.\(^{45}\)

Value 2: God Initiates Change within a Person

Instead of adopting a sense of responsibility to fix a person or manipulate a person to make changes, a coach believes that it is God who must initiate inward change if that change is to be meaningful and lasting. Stoltzfus has written, “A coach waits to see what God is doing in the client’s life before engaging it, instead of trying to push a change agenda on the client”\(^{46}\) This attitude toward change is in agreement with how Jesus related to God and others (John 5:19, 30). Jesus’ words and actions in relationship with others were initiated by God.

Value 3: Responsibility is Personal

Another significant value in coaching is the belief that the responsibility of solving problems belongs to the one with the problem. Instead of helping people to grow, “taking responsibility for others stunts their growth.”\(^{47}\) Coaches choose to love a person too much to become irresponsible by assuming responsibility that belongs to the client. In coaching, the other person chooses the agenda, solution, and action steps that can lead to spiritual growth.

Value 4: Transformation Takes Place Experientially


\(^{46}\) Ibid., 74.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 75.
We live in an unprecedented era of communication and information. Within minutes of an event occurring in our nation or in another region of the world, news is sent over the internet to be communicated through cell phones, computers, radio, television, and social media outlets, such as Facebook and Twitter. In addition, information about virtually any subject imaginable is available via the internet. How many of us have turned to the internet to gain information to help in making a repair, purchase, or gaining a greater knowledge of a topic? The wealth of readily available information has caused many people to adopt an attitude of “if I just had more information I could solve the problem.” How does this relate to spiritual growth and coaching?

Some people approach life issues, including their spiritual development, with the belief that “the more information I receive, the more transformation I will experience.” While coaching places value on acquiring information, coaching realizes that more is needed for lasting results. According to Stoltzfus, coaching seeks to focus “on engaging in teachable moments of life in the context of a transparent coaching relationship to produce lasting change.”

Value 5: Life Is God’s Classroom

Life is God’s classroom for experiencing change leading to spiritual growth. Stoltfuz has stated, “Life is an ongoing development process custom designed by God for our growth. Coaching works because it takes seriously what life brings as God’s agenda

48 Ibid.
for change.”

Coaches value that God redemptively uses a person’s life experiences for his glory and our greater good (Rom 8:28). Coaches actively listen because each incident in the client’s life is meaningful and has significance. In coaching, the life experiences of the client offer opportunities for faith development.

Value 6: Community is Essential for Spiritual Growth

The Bible states that there is one God, yet God exists in three Persons: God the Creator, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:29, 32; Eph 4:6; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6; Gal 3:20; 1 Tim 2:5; Matt 28:19). What does that imply? At the center of who God is, God is relational. God exists in community within the Godhead. Because humankind is made in the image of God, God designed humanity to also be relational – relational vertically with God and horizontally with each other. The significance of this value is that there is an aspect of God and ourselves that cannot be experienced apart from choosing to live in spiritual community. As Christians share life together, there is a mutual transformation that takes place (Prov 27:17). One of the key values of coaching is nurturing authentic, transparent, life-giving relationships in the context of community.

Value 7: Each Person is Unique

In a world dominated by copies, duplicates, versions, and replicas, humans remain unique. No two people are identical. God has made each person a masterpiece (Eph

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49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.
Therefore, each person should be valued for the uniqueness that they are. Coaching celebrates that each person is a valuable, unique, original creation of God. Instead of attempting to force everyone into the same mold, coaches celebrate the specialness that each person offers to the world. Coaching is individualized because every person is a unique person.\textsuperscript{51}

Key Skills

In addition to key values, coaching involves several indispensable skills. Stoltzfus has set forth three essential skills used in coaching: listening, asking questions, and encouragement.\textsuperscript{52} When practiced together, these skills can have a synergistic impact upon the client’s progressive movement in spiritual growth.

Skill 1: Listening

Everyone listens on some level. Some people listen attentively, many others listen passively. For example, some persons’ concept of listening is a brief pause in speaking so that they can formulate what to say in response to the speaker. For others, listening while someone else speaks is more of a courtesy given to another person in order to earn the right to share their opinion or advice about a topic or issue. These are examples of passive listening; however, in coaching, it is essential for the coach to consistently practice attentive listening that focuses on what the client is saying instead of focusing on formulating a response.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 77.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 143-187, 269-280.
The Bible has much to say about attentive, active listening. Jesus often admonished others to hear attentively (Matthew 11:15; 13:9, 18, 43; 15:10; 21:33). At Jesus’ transfiguration, God directed the disciples to listen attentively to what Jesus said (Matthew 17:5). In the story of Jesus’ visit to the home of Martha and Mary, Jesus highlighted Mary’s active listening as Jesus spoke (Luke 10:38-42). In Jesus’ address often identified as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructed the listeners to “consider carefully how you listen” (Luke 8:18, NIV). James would later remind his readers that “everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (Jam 1:19, NIV). When attentive listening is practiced, the person listening is acting in character with God. Stoltfuz has written,

> When you are communicating with God in prayer, what is He doing most of the time? Is He constantly talking, filling every quiet moment with sage advice and cosmic ideas? Or is He mostly listening? God, who knows our every need before we ask and the answers to all our problems, takes the time to listen to each one of us. To listen is to imitate God.\(^{53}\)

In coaching others, attentive listening is an essential skill that must be practiced throughout the conversation with the client. As campus minister and educator, Ircel Harrison has stated,

> Listening requires a paradigm shift on the part of the coach. Those involved in ministry move out of a proclamation mindset into a coaching mindset. The proclamation approach involves discerning what God is doing and then sharing it with others for the purpose of persuading them to join God in God’s work. The coaching approach draws out the disciple’s discernment about what God is doing and then assists the disciple in living out God’s calling in her life.\(^{54}\)


\(^{54}\) Tidsworth and Harrison, 57.
Attentive listening involves three aspects: (1) being aware of the coach’s inner conversation, (2) attentively listening to the person being coached, and (3) always being sensitive to the “still small voice of God” (1 Kgs 19:12). In order to be successful in listening to another person, the coach must be aware of what is going on in his own inner life. Does he have any unresolved issues within his own life and can these issues hinder his ability to listen attentively while another person is speaking? Does the coach have opinions or beliefs that might cause him to be closed-minded to what the client has to say? Is the coach engaged in an intimate relationship with Christ and able to discern the Holy Spirit’s promptings or does the coach feel distant in his relationship with God at the time of coaching? By listening to what is being communicated in the coach’s inner world, the coach is able to deal with and clear any inner clutter that may be a hindrance to successfully hearing the client. A coach also listens to what the client has to say verbally and nonverbally. In addition to what the client speaks, a coach should also focus on what is being communicated by the client in non-verbal ways, such as energy level, body language, tone of voice, and the conversational flow. In addition, a Christian coach “listens to the Holy Spirit for insights, intuitions, and revelation that cannot come from words alone.” Because the client may be struggling to discern the communication of the Holy Spirit, at times, “a coach not only listens to the PBC (person being coached), he also


56 Ibid.
listens for her.\footnote{Chad W. Hall and Bill C. Cooper and Kathryn A. McElveen, \textit{Faith Coaching: A Conversational Approach to Helping Others Move Forward in Faith} (Hickory, NC: Coach Approach Ministries, 2009), 60.} Listening involves an inward look (at the coach’s inner life), an outward look (at the person being coached), and an upward look (at what the Holy Spirit may be communicating).

One of the key factors in developing good listening skills is determining the purpose of listening. A coach should have several listening goals. First, by listening attentively, the coach wants to communicate unconditional acceptance.\footnote{Tidsworth, 54-55.} Second, the coach wants to convey the desire to go beyond connection at a shallow level.\footnote{Ibid., 55.} Third, in listening attentively, the coach desires to demonstrate and encourage the client to listen to “the Voice Within” (the Holy Spirit). Fourth, the coach wants to communicate to the client that they have found a safe place to explore their thoughts, feelings, questions, doubts, and emotions.\footnote{Ibid.} Fifth, by listening instead of choosing to offer advice, the coach emphasizes the responsibility of the client to determine direction, discover solutions, set goals, and decide action steps to accomplish the goals. These listening goals in coaching flow out of the coach’s belief that God is already at work in the client and will guide the client to discover and follow the most meaningful and purposeful path to experiencing faith development.
There are several potential hindrances that can prevent the coach from hearing a client at a deeper level (attentive listening). The potential hindrances include the following: (1) An inner desire to diagnose what is faulty with the client instead of believing that the client is the expert of his own life, (2) Assuming the role of a critic whose role is to evaluate what the client is saying instead of believing that the client is capable of evaluating their own actions, (3) Assuming the responsibility for problem-solving in the life of the client, (4) Becoming distracted from listening carefully to the client by other things, persons, or tasks unrelated to the coaching session with the client, and (5) Attempting to listen to the client when the coach is overly tired instead of rescheduling the coaching session for a time when the coach will be rested and able to listen attentively. In coaching, effective listening is more than making the choice not to interrupt the person speaking. Attentive listening is choosing to remain present in the conversation, focused on the client, and fully tuned in to the client’s speaking.

Skill 2: Asking Questions

A second significant skill in coaching is the practice of asking open-ended questions instead of offering advice, opinions, or personal knowledge to the client. The belief that asking questions has more value than imparting information contrasts the common view that gaining knowledge is the key to success. As Webb notes,

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61 These aspects were adapted from Mark Tidsworth and Ircel Harrison, Disciple Development Coaching: Christian Formation for the 21st Century (Macon, GA: Nurturing Faith, Inc., 2013), 56.
“Breakthrough rarely comes through new knowledge, because looking at additional information from the same perspective just keeps us on the same road…A shift in perspective – seeing what we already ‘know’ with new eyes – can lead to discovery of new roads.” The purpose of the coach’s questions are not focused on gaining information about the client, but on assisting the client with discovery of a pathway for forward movement. Questions asked by the coach in a timely manner help the client to engage in a deeper level of thinking and do not limit the client’s response to a one or two-word answer that may have subtle implications of the coach’s opinion or bias regarding the topic being viewed in the coaching session.

A coaching conversation is very different from other kinds of conversation in that the client “should get around 80% of the airtime and the coach 20%.” By ensuring that the client is the “star” of the coaching session, the role of the coach becomes that of a facilitator to help the client to look differently and deeper at the knowledge the client already possesses, instead of the coach assuming the role of expert of the topic being addressed in the session. Often, when a person is asked open-ended questions, hearing their own response invokes inner processing at a deeper level that results in self-discovery of goals and actions that will lead to forward movement in faith development.

Skill 3: Offering Encouragement

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63 Coe, 133.

64 Stoltzfus, Leadership Coaching, 189.
Another essential skill for an effective coaching relationship is the coach’s practice of offering encouragement to the client throughout the coaching experience. Through the use of encouragement, the coach becomes a catalyst for the client’s motivation, affirmation, and celebration. By purposefully supporting a person, a coach has the opportunity to be a facilitator of inspiration and transformation in another person’s life.

One of the early followers of Jesus in spreading the Gospel to the world was Barnabas. Barnabas accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey to spread the Gospel in Asia. In introducing Barnabas into the Acts narrative of the church’s missionary activity, Luke identifies him as a “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36, NIV). In a later missionary journey, the biblical record states that Paul “traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people” (Acts 20:2, NIV). When Paul wrote his letter to the Roman Christians one of the spirit gifts of service he identified was encouragement (Rom 12:8). When coaches offer clients encouragement, the coach’s actions follow the practice used by God and early Christians to support spiritual growth.

These three skills – listening, asking questions, and offering encouragement – have a synergistic relationship in coaching. As a person learns to listen to the promptings of the indwelling Holy Spirit in the context of a supportive, encouraging, affirming relationship with a coach, the potential for dramatic spiritual growth is fostered. Using these skills, a coach has the opportunity to facilitate a life-giving relationship with a client that moves the client to live out their life’s purpose.
Models of Coaching

Since coaching’s inception in the business world with Whitmore, conversational models have been a part of the coaching experience. The models were created to assist in moving the coaching conversation to a desired end. While there are similarities between all of the models, there are also numerous variations depending upon the context in which coaching will be offered and the best process decided to reach the desired result with clients. The following are three examples of coaching conversational models from the context of business and leadership development as well as three models that are used in ministry contexts. Finally, this section will conclude with a rationale for the creation and design of the Radical Coaching conversational model.

G.R.O.W. Model

John Whitmore has created the most widely known coaching conversational model using the acronym “grow.” This model was designed to increase the productivity of clients, especially in the business and leadership world. Each coaching session began with the coach asking questions to facilitate the client’s choice of a goal for the session. Once the goal had been clarified by the client, the coach assisted the client in gaining a clear understanding of the client’s current relationship (reality) to the goal by asking questions. Next, the coach used open-ended questions to lead the client to explore potential options for accomplishing the goal. Finally, the coach facilitated the creation of an action plan by the client to reach the intended goal by defining what was to be done.

65 Whitmore, “GROW Model”, 54.
when it was to be done, and who was involved in implementing the self-determined actions. The final aspect of the conversation related to attaining a commitment by the client to follow through with the action plan created in the session. This model continues to be widely used in business and executive coaching and serves as the foundation for numerous coaching models.

T.G.R.O.W Model⁶⁶

Myles Downey has modified Whitmore’s GROW model to create the TGROW conversational coaching model. In Downey’s model, the conversational flow mirrors that of Whitmore’s model with the exception that each coaching session begins with working with the client to determine the topic (T) for the session. Once the topic has been determined by the client, the coach asks open-ended questions to facilitate the client to select a goal (or goals) related to the topic, assessing the client’s current relation to the goal, explore options for reaching the goal, clarifying the client’s plan of action and calling for commitment by the client to the self-created plan of action. Like Whitmore’s GROW model, Downey’s model has been used in the areas of individual, team, and organization training and development.

InDiCom Coaching Model⁶⁷


Cindy Coe, Amy Zhender, and Dennis C. Kinlaw created the InDiCom Coaching conversational model designed around three stages: involve, discover, and commit. Each of the stages has goals for the client to consider prior to moving to the next stage in the coaching conversational process. The primary focus in the involve stage involves the coach asking questions of the client to establish the purpose for the coaching conversation, lead the client to take ownership of the issue that is the purpose of the conversation, and to lead the client to state the desired ideal result of the coaching session. The discovery stage involves the coach facilitating a brainstorming activity by the client to identify options related to the coaching topic to experience shifts in thinking that will result in productive action. The commit stage involves the coach asking questions that facilitates the creation of an action plan by the client that leads to superior performance and better relationships in the workplace.

4D Flow Approach Coaching Model

Steve Ogne has created the TransforMissional Coaching conversational model for use with developing and empowering ministry leadership. Ogne’s approach is purposely designed to enhance the relational aspect of coaching by asking the client/ministry leader four primary questions. The first question relates to discerning where God is working in the client personally and in ministry. The second question focuses on discovery of how God wants the client to participate in what God is doing. The third question seeks to

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develop next steps in light of the client’s response to the first two questions. The final question seeks to answer who is needed in joining God at work. Ogne’s coaching conversational approach is intended to lead the client to accomplish constructive ministry tasks, while purposefully working with God to transform the client’s character.

The Coach Model

Keith Webb has designed The Coach Model using an acronym of “coach” to create a coaching conversational flow with a circular movement involving five steps: connect, outcome, awareness, course, and highlights. In the connect step, the goal is for coach to establish rapport and trust with the client, while also following up on actions steps from previous coaching sessions. The outcome step involves the coach asking open-ended question to the client to determine the client’s desired outcome for the coaching session. With the client’s intended outcome stated, the awareness step involves the coach facilitating a reflective dialogue with the client for the purpose of producing discovery, insight, and new perspectives. The coaching conversation is designed then to move to focusing on what course of action the client deems applicable to progress toward the desired outcome. The final step is a dialogue between the coach and client to review the session’s conversation, reinforce the client’s selected actions and to offer support. Webb’s conversational model was created with the idea of equipping the ministry leader to coach others in dealing with life issues, accomplishing goals, and becoming fully developed as a Christian leader indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

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Stoltzfus Coaching Model

Stoltzfus, a pioneer in the Christian coaching field, has created a coaching model built upon the values of each session being relational-based, client-centered, and goal-driven. On that foundation, Stoltzfus has designed the conversational flow of each session around listening, asking, acting, and supporting. Listening and asking, according to Stoltzfus, are the catalyst skills the coach uses to move the conversation forward with the client. Asking timely, powerful questions, the coach helps the client to decide session topics, goals, and action steps for personal and leadership development in ministry. Once a client has decided on the goal(s) and strategies in the session, the coach’s role is to facilitate a client-selected action plan and offer support for the implementation of the client’s plan.

Rationale for the RADICAL Coaching Model

The Radical Coaching conversational model outlined in Chapter 1 is similar in design to the other coaching models previously mentioned. My coaching model is established on the foundations for coaching and the key skills stated earlier in this chapter. There are, however, several unique aspects of the Radical Coaching conversational model that should be noted. First, my coaching model places a premium emphasis on the coach-client relationship and the relationship between the client and the Holy Spirit. Instead of moving rapidly to topic selection and goal-setting, the Radical Coaching conversational model sees establishing and building relationship as the basis on

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70 Stoltzfus, “Coaching Model”, Leadership Coaching, 82.
which to continue the coaching conversation with the client. Prayer with the client is a purposeful aspect of enhancing relationship with the client and the Holy Spirit and is practiced early in each coaching session and at the conclusion of every session. Listening attentively to the client in the first minutes of the coaching session allows the coach to demonstrate in praying with the client the skills of asking questions, listening to the Holy Spirit’s promptings, and taking action as the coach voices confidence in and support of the client without any effort to engage in manipulation or coercion. This approach helps to set the climate for the coach to ask the client how the Voice Within is guiding her as the coaching conversation continues to progress. The dynamic of practicing and demonstrating how to listen to the Voice Within establishes the atmosphere that encourages honesty and transparency in the coach-client conversation when exploring the client’s feelings about the implementation of previous session action plans as well as the action plan that will be developed in the current coaching session.

Second, the Radical Coaching model is focused on facilitating a sense of self-awareness moving to self-satisfaction in relation to the client’s personal faith development. Rather than primarily focusing upon movement in business applications, leadership development, or ministry accomplishments, my coaching model is concerned with the client’s spiritual growth. Through the use of timely, open-ended and scaling questions, the coach nurtures the client to realize and trust her ability to hear the Voice Within and formulate an action plan that moves the client forward in spiritual development fostering a more vibrant, life-giving, intimate walk with God.
Finally, the belief in, support for and encouragement of the client take center stage throughout the Radical Coaching conversational flow. From the initial relationship conversation to the final living it out conversation, the coach takes on the role of being the client’s spiritual friend, most excited cheerleader, most ardent supporter, and most assured believer in the client’s ability to hear and follow God regardless of the content and context of the session topic. The accountability called for in my approach does not focus the client on someone or something to enforce the implementation of their action plans, but to listen to the Voice Within as the best source of encouragement for success.

Just as physical growth is typical, spiritual growth is natural for Christians. Scripture advocates faith development; however, studies indicate that many Christians are experiencing a stagnation in moving through the stages of faith. Coaching, specifically the Radical Coaching conversational flow, offers a new approach that will assist Christians in experiencing an increased self-perception of spiritual growth leading to maturity.
CHAPTER 3
RADICAL COACHING AND GRACE COVENANT WORSHIP CENTER

Faith development is an integral aspect of the spiritual identity of Grace Covenant Worship Center (GCWC). From the church’s birth to the present, faith development has been a central focus of the church’s mission. Coaching is needed at GCWC to help attendees who are experiencing stagnation in their growth as the result of encountering an inner wall or gap between who they are and who they hope to be. This chapter describes the ministry context of GCWC and argues that the Radical Coaching process can synergistically complement the core values of the church by helping church attendees navigate through the stages of faith.

Project Context

History of Hogansville

In the 1830’s, William Hogan, who owned two original land grants from the State of Georgia Land Grant of 1826, established a community approximately fifty miles southwest of Atlanta that was later named Hogansville. The community soon gained significance due to being located along the east-west road that connected West Point and Augusta and, later, the railroad that connected West Point and Atlanta. The transportation of people and goods through Hogansville along with the development of a strong

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agricultural economy attracted investors to the area. With the abundance of cotton grown in the surrounding area, Hogansville soon became home to several mills. Both commercial and residential development followed soon, and the city became distinguished as a mill town. According to the city’s online history, by 1870, Hogansville became known as “a center of commerce and the largest cotton market in the area.”

The impact of the Civil War was devastating on the Hogansville area economy. To survive and boost the economy, Hogan’s family laid the town out in business lots on both sides of the railroad tracks creating the Main Street business district that continues today. The sale of the lots improved the economic stability of the town and created a sense of hope among area residents. Local businesses, schools, and churches were constructed bringing new people, employment, and commerce to the area. By the time the city incorporated on October 12, 1870, the town had once again risen to prominence in the region.

The decades that followed brought significant prosperity to Hogansville due to extensive cotton farming in the surrounding area, the addition of several mills that produced commodities primarily from cotton, and the establishment of numerous local businesses to support the growing population of the region. During this period, the town was known for its cotton market and merchants that provided supplies for the residents of Troup, Heard, Coweta, and Meriwether counties. Virtually all freight, passenger traffic,

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.
and mail for the region passed through Hogansville due to the town’s strategic place on both the east-west road and north-south railroad.\textsuperscript{4}

The decimation of the cotton industry due to boll weevil infestation in the 1920’s and the Great Depression of the 1930’s devastated the economy of Hogansville and the region. Many of the programs initiated by the Roosevelt Administration, such as the WPA (Works Progress Administration created as part of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal) provided new projects in the town and surrounding area that fueled economic recovery. Stones from nearby quarries were used to build local public buildings and facilities as well as supply rocks for other government-funded projects across the region, such as a seawall in Mobile, Alabama.\textsuperscript{5} Hogansville’s most noted contribution to history during this time was the hand-controlled Ford automobile sold to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and used when the President visited nearby Warm Springs. This car continues to be on display at Little White House in Warm Springs.\textsuperscript{6}

After World War II and the Korean War, Hogansville once again became a center for commerce in the region. Local businesses thrived as people from the surrounding counties drove to the town to purchase supplies and enjoy cultural events at the Royal Theater. Life centered around the town’s family atmosphere, schools, and churches.


\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{6} http://www.cityofhogansville.org/history (accessed October 12, 2018).
Traffic in the town on Saturdays was congested as people from the surrounding counties joined residents in shopping, eating in local restaurants, and participating in special events. The emergence of available and affordable automobiles along with the construction of new and improved roads in the 1950’s, 1960’s, and 1970’s including Interstate 85 brought an end to this era in the town’s history as people were able to easily travel to larger cities in the area for recreation, shopping, employment, entertainment, and worship.

Current Context of Hogansville

In many ways Hogansville has experienced little change in recent years. The city continues to be a small town known for its family atmosphere, locally-owned businesses, community-supported schools, and numerous small churches representing a variety of denominations and faith traditions. Population growth in Hogansville has remained virtually stagnant from the 3060 residents reported in the 2010 Census to the 2017 Population Estimate of 3105 persons. In diversity, the population of the city is 48.1% white, 46.6% black, with the remaining 5.3% a mixture of other ethnic or international profiles. The median age for Hogansville residents is 34.6 years old compared to Georgia’s median age of 36.2 years old. Economically, the median household income

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for Hogansville is $28,452 compared to $51,037 for Georgia residents, which accounts for the city’s rate of 31.2% of individuals below the poverty level findings compared to Georgia’s 17.8% rate of individuals below the poverty level.\textsuperscript{10} Manufacturing, retail businesses, restaurants, transportation, and education continue to be the major employers in the city with 33.3% of residents commuting outside of the county to jobs.\textsuperscript{11} With Hogansville’s location alongside Interstate 85 between the cities of Atlanta and West Point, limited future growth, primarily in the areas of transportation and hospitality, can be anticipated.

Grace Covenant Worship Center (GCWC)

In August 2018, GCWC celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the church being chartered in August 1988. There are no official written records of the church’s history. The story that follows has been compiled after a review of an unpublished flyer distributed at the thirtieth year celebration worship service and an oral interview conducted by the researcher with three long-time church attendees: Nona Cook, Kinnett Overman, and Jim Weathers. Additional information about the church’s history and current story was compiled after an oral interview of Pastors Alex and Jill Montgomery with the researcher.\textsuperscript{12} Interviews with the pastors and church attendees were audio

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} The oral interview with the three long-time church attendees as well as the interview with the Pastors were conducted on Sunday, September 30, 2018 in the Pastor’s Office at GCWC.
recorded with the consent of the participants to assure accuracy in writing the church’s story.

The Church’s Story

The historical roots of GCWC are traced to a women’s bible study and prayer meeting that began in 1976. In the Spring of 1976, six women decided to meet weekly to pray for revival and evangelism in their families and the Hogansville area. In the years that followed, the number of women in attendance at the prayer meeting and the frequency of their meetings became sporadic but never ceased. According to the handout at the church’s 30th anniversary, at a Wednesday morning meeting in 1987, “God spoke to one of the ladies and said, ‘Start the meetings again and don’t put it off,’” which was interpreted as a directive to return to meeting weekly for prayer and bible study. Since that time, women in the church have met each week for corporate and intercessory prayer, bible study, and to encourage one another.

In the early days, the women gathered for prayer at the Village Inn Beauty Shop in Hogansville but soon decided more space was needed due to increasing attendance. One of the attendees, Nona Cook, offered to host the women’s bible study and prayer group at her home and, after husbands asked to join the meeting too, the number of those attending caused the group to move to the rear room of Ann’s Floral Shop. Nona Cook states, “When the men started attending the bible study and prayer group, we realized

13 This quote was copied from the unpublished thirtieth year celebration handout distributed by the church at the August 2018 30-year celebration of the church’s founding.
God was up to something. We didn’t set out to start a church. People from various denominations and backgrounds starting coming to the meetings.”¹⁴ Two months later, due to the continual growth in attendance, the group relocated to a storefront on Commerce Street in Hogansville. The group continued to meet in the storefront for a limited time until the deteriorating conditions of the building, plus the added growth in attendance, led to the decision by the group in 1993 to move into an old wood-framed house on property the church purchased on Bass Cross Road in Hogansville. In the following years, the church renovated the house to become administrative offices, added a worship building, education space, and a fellowship hall and continues to meet at that location.

Three additional facilities-related milestone events have been a part in shaping the people who are the GCWC family. In December of 2004, lightning struck the worship building resulting in the loss of the structure. Once again, church attendees were cramped for space as worship services were moved to the church’s fellowship hall and other ministries faced new limits. In the months that followed, a multitude of people in the church and the community united to rebuild the worship building by providing labor, skills, and financial resources. Seventeen months later, a new worship building was dedicated that had twice the space as the previous building. The excitement and unity in church attendees over the new building spurred new growth in attendance and ministry. In 2014, tornadoes in the area removed the roof of the worship building and caused major

structural damage to the building. Once again, worship was moved to the much smaller fellowship hall, and other ministries faced limited space. Despite the setback, church attendees chose to unite in prayer, worship, and renew their focus on serving in the Hogansville community. Two years later, the church’s current worship building was completed and serves today as the primary gathering place for worship, conferences, bible study, and corporate prayer.

The significance of these facility-related events in the story of GCWC are the treasured memories shared by those who attended the church during that era of the church’s history. These memories include the amazing movement of the Holy Spirit as the church experienced and witnessed many come to Christ, several persons healed of various illnesses, some people freed from addiction to alcohol and drug dependency, an overwhelming sense of unity of purpose, increased involvement in missions locally and abroad, and a fresh desire for exciting and meaningful worship. Today, the church’s worship building stands as a symbol of God’s faithfulness, the church’s shared vision, a continuing commitment to spreading the Gospel of God’s Grace in Christ, and a focal point in the community of God’s abiding Presence.

Pastoral Leadership

One of the distinguishing factors in GCWC’s story is that the church has only had four pastors since the church’s beginning. In May of 1988, those attending the Sunday morning services in the storefront on Commerce Street asked Reverend Murray and
Diane Callahan to serve as the church’s first pastors. Three months later, in August 1988, the Callahans officiated at the formal chartering of the church as “Trinity Worship Center.” The Callahans served the church until deciding to return to the mission field in 1990. In 1990, Reverend L. J. Wood became the pastor and served for approximately two years. In 1992, Reverend Wil and Virginia Fisher became pastors and served the church and community until 2002, when Pastors Wil and Virginia chose to become Pastors Emeritus due to declining health. The Fishers remained active in the church serving as health and opportunity allowed until their death. In October 2002, Reverend Alex and Jill Montgomery became Pastors of Trinity Worship Center and led the church to change the church’s name. In 2003, the name was changed to “Grace Covenant Worship Center” to better reflect the church’s commitment to proclaiming the message of God’s Grace and the value the church placed on worshiping God as an expression of intimacy, praise, and healing.

Core Values

One of the researcher’s topics during the group interview with Nona Cook, Kinnett Overman, and Jim Weathers concerned the core values of GCWC. The question posed to the three long-time attendees of the church was, “What are the significant core values practiced by Grace Covenant Worship Center?” The purpose of this line of inquiry

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15 GCWC views both the husband and wife as “pastors” of the church.

16 This interview was conducted by the researcher with the three church attendees on September 30, 2018.
was to acquire an understanding of the basic beliefs that guide the church’s praxis with the idea of learning how the church’s core values might relate with the foundational values of coaching. Those interviewed provided the following core values.

*The proclamation and living out of a grace-based message.* The key belief that permeates the church’s purpose and praxis is that by God’s Grace through faith in Jesus – His life, death on the cross, and resurrection to new life – a person becomes the righteousness of Christ as a result of Jesus’ finished work on the cross. In explaining the church’s mission statement of “Restoring Hope…Experiencing Christ’s Life!”; the church’s website states:

Grace Covenant Worship Center is a fellowship of restoration called to minister the liberty of our sonship in Christ and freedom from the bondage of sin. Our desire is that we might receive the fullness of our inheritance in Him by ‘grace through faith’ (Eph. 2:8). By establishing our faith squarely on the finished work of the cross, we teach every believer that they can have the hope of victory in all aspects of life by simply releasing faith in what Jesus has already provided. Nothing could articulate our vision with anymore clarity than by the words of the apostle Paul in Galatians 4:7 ‘Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.’ Because of Calvary, we are free from the ‘shame mentality’ of having to earn God's favor and blessing by our works. Rather, now as sons, we bring forth those ‘good’ works by releasing His life on the inside of us by the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:27). Living the Christian life is impossible; only Christ can live it through us (Gal. 2:20 and Romans 5:10) by faith in His ability.¹⁷

The preeminence of this belief was the primary factor behind the church adopting the new name of “Grace Covenant Worship Center.” Two banners prominently displayed on the stage in the church’s worship building visually communicate this core value of

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Grace. One banner states, “Where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Romans 5:20). The other banner’s message reads, “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1). The proclamation and demonstration of God’s grace in those who attend the church is the source of life as the Holy Spirit expresses Jesus’ life in and through the believer to others. In explaining the impact of the message of grace, Kinnett gave this testimony,

> When I heard the message of God’s grace, I realized that God is not mad at me. All I had done in the past to make God happy, I suddenly understand that God was already happy with me and loved me right where I was in the midst of whatever I was in at the time. This awareness has been life-altering for me. He loves me unconditionally and always has. Now, Jesus is living His life in me and through me as I abide in Him and invite the Holy Spirit to work in me.  

_Spirit-filled worship focused on facilitating intimacy with God._ Both worship of God and intimacy with God are two significant themes in the spiritual chemistry of GCWC. As Pastor Alex Montgomery explained, “Worship is in our church’s name because worship is very important to us; however, it is more than just a time of singing. Our goal is to for our corporate worship to facilitate an experience of personal and collective intimacy with God.” In the interview with the long-time church attendees, Jim Weathers described the Sunday morning worship experience in these words,

> The Holy Spirit has the liberty to do whatever He wants to do. We are in His presence. We don’t come to manipulate Him. We don’t come to get Him to do something for us. We’ve come just to sit in His presence, to adore God, to

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19 Pastor Alex Montgomery, interviewed by Mark Boyd, September 30, 2018.
worship Him, and allow Him to do whatever He wants to do. So, there is an openness and a freedom in worship to say, ‘Father, we’re here for you.’

*Every person has inherent value.* At GCWC, the belief that all people have an inherent value from God is foundational in how each person is loved and accepted. Nona stated, “We try to make all people feel welcome, loved and accepted regardless of who they are or their experiences in life. This is more than our goal; it is who we are!” Jim Weathers followed up Nona’s response by explaining,

We value every person regardless of their life’s story. It’s not because our priority is to grow numerically as a church. We want that person to feel valued and to know someone cares about them... It is not what benefits the church that matters. Everyone is treated the same way. When you come through the door, there are no big ‘I’s’ or little ‘you’s.’

Jim illustrated this core value of each person celebrated at the church with the story of a woman who recently shared her life story in the worship service. The woman had been a drug addict in her past and had fallen back into drug usage. Instead of judging, criticizing, or rejecting her, church attendees moved alongside of her to embrace her to communicate and demonstrate that she was loved, accepted and celebrated (valued) by both God and GCWC regardless of her drug addiction.

*Freedom is given as diversity is celebrated.* Those who call GCWC “family” are a human mosaic of diversity. The diversity in church attendees includes race, ethnic or

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national heritage, faith traditions, income, education, employment status, occupation, age, successes or failures in life experiences, spiritual gifting, and ministry calling. A snapshot of those attending a Sunday morning worship service may include African-Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics, persons from Pakistan, Puerto Rico, Africa, and Guatemala.

In the interview, Jim, Nona, and Kinnett explained that diversity is not something tolerated at GCWC but celebrated by giving each person the freedom to worship, serve, and express themselves as they feel led by the Holy Spirit. The practice of freedom amidst diversity is most evident at a Sunday morning worship service. Some attendees will be singing quietly. Others will sing looking toward heaven with their arms lifted. Still others may come and kneel as the congregation sings. Some people may engage in offering private prayers of praise, while a few may wave flags before the Lord as an expression of their worship of God. Occasionally, someone will dance before the Lord. One worshiper often uses her talent to create amazing paintings as she feels led by the Spirit during the worship experience.

**Being a safe place for restoration.** Often, those who come to GCWC arrive with a sense of brokenness, confusion, woundedness, feeling worthless, and deep inner hurt. Through the last few years, the church has become a safe place for experiencing inner restoration, especially for those who have served in pastoral or missionary ministries. As Kinnett has explained, “GCWC has become a church of turnaround as God works in the hurting and broken to facilitate healing and restoration. Our joy is to see persons restored
to spiritual health and called to go out from us to new ministry opportunities.” Adding to Kinnett’s comments, Nona told of a young couple who came to GCWC from the mission field, experienced spiritual restoration and returned to the mission field to live out their life’s calling.

*Being mission-minded is a way of life.* Even before GCWC was officially constituted as a church, when the ladies first started meeting in 1987 for bible study and prayer, one of the practices that was observed each week was a collection for missions. Missions, both locally and internationally, are a significant value embraced by church attendees. Kinnett illustrated the mission-mindedness of the church by telling the story of a homeless man that the church embraced by providing food, housing assistance, and transportation until his death. Currently, the church offers assistance with food to those in the community, assistance with transportation to medical appointments, outreach to those in prison and transition centers in the area, service projects in the community such as a Fall Festival as well as supporting mission endeavors in many countries. At GCWC, missions is not a church program as much as it is a mindset that is lived out through countless acts to those in need.

Synergy Between GCWC’s Core Values and Coaching

The core values of coaching, especially the Radical Coaching conversational model that I created, align well with the values of GCWC. The Radical Coaching conversational flow begins by placing value on living in relationship with God, yourself,

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and others. Underlying this aspect of the coaching conversation is the belief that God invites every person into intimate, life-giving relationships. For Christians, becoming more in tune with listening to the indwelling Holy Spirit provides both intimate connection, inner self-awareness, and guidance in life. Another significant value of the Radical Coaching model is an unconditional belief in the value of every person. Each person is uniquely designed by God and is to be treasured as one made in God’s image. The Radical Coaching process also places significant value on freedom in that coaching is client-driven. Clients, in a relationship with the indwelling Holy Spirit and their inner self, determine and create their action plans in each coaching session. Finally, the Radical Coaching conversational flow is structured to focus on the client’s forward movement regardless of the session topic chosen by the client. Foundational to the forward movement-orientation of the Radical Coaching process is the belief that God desires each person to move through the various stages of faith development.

Research Methodology

The intention of this research was to determine how effective the Radical Coaching conversational model can be in facilitating a self-perception of faith development. If there would be a self-perceived difference in spiritual growth by the four clients who participated in the study? In other words, would the use of the Radical Coaching conversational model enhance, hinder, or have no influence in the faith development of the clients?
Qualitative Study

A qualitative research methodology using a case study approach was chosen for the project to understand the research problem in the context of selected clients who attend a local church. As professor and researcher John Creswell has stated,

Qualitative researchers…collect data in the field where the participants experience the issue or problem under study…This up close information gathered by actually talking to people and seeing them behave and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research. In the natural setting, the researchers have face-to-face interaction over time.24

A case study approach was used due to the non-numerical data that would be collected, the project’s use of personal one-on-one coaching sessions with clients, the use of semi-structured client interviews, and the “up-close” conversation and observation of the Radical Coaching process in uncovering a client’s self-perception of faith development. By using this methodology, the researcher was able to gather information from the “human side,” the experiential aspect, of the issue of faith development in relation to the clients’ self-perceived progression through the various stages of faith to determine the effectiveness of the Radical Coaching conversational process.

Structure of the Project

Four clients who attend Grace Covenant Worship Center were selected by the researcher to participate in six one-hour coaching sessions that followed the Radical Coaching conversational process over a three-month period. Each client completed a

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semi-structured entrance and exit interview in coaching sessions one and six respectively to determine the self-perceived sense of satisfaction about their spiritual growth at the beginning and end of participation in the coaching process. During each session, client-determined action plans were created along with self-defined accountability measures related to the client’s chosen topic for the coaching session. All six coaching sessions with each client were recorded for use in data analysis. At the conclusion of each session, observation notes were made by the coach related to the quality of the Radical Coaching conversational flow in the session, the coach’s perception of the client’s level of energy, focus, and active participation in the session, and the coach’s perceived effectiveness in listening, asking timely and strategic open-ending and scaling questions, and offering encouragement during the session.

Data Collection

Each of the recorded coaching sessions was transcribed by the researcher. Coaching observation notes were used along with the transcribed coaching sessions to identify common topics, themes, action steps, and client perceptions of the Radical Coaching conversational process to facilitate a self-perception of spiritual growth. This approach to data collection aligns with Creswell’s “basic qualitative analysis” in which he has written, the “researcher collects qualitative data, analyzes it for themes or perspectives, and reports 4-5 themes.”

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25 Ibid. 184.
As the next chapter indicates, each client had a unique response in following the Radical Coaching conversational model. There was a strong overall correlation to the Radical Coaching conversational flow to facilitate spiritual growth during the study. Topics, goals, and action steps selected by the client in each coaching session differed. Client self-perception of the satisfaction in the rate of personal faith development varied. Clients’ responses indicate that each client did feel a sense of forward movement in their spiritual growth as a result of being a study participant.
CHAPTER 4

RADICAL COACHING IN THE CONTEXT OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Spiritual growth has been the study’s context for exploring the effectiveness of the Radical Coaching conversational model to facilitate a feeling of satisfaction related to faith development. Four clients have participated in six individual, one-hour coaching sessions over a three-month period in which self-determined action plans were created in each session using the Radical Coaching process. Also, all clients described their understanding of spiritual growth before and after the coaching sessions as well as the impact of the Radical Coaching process on his or her self-perception of faith development in the entrance and exit interviews. This chapter reviews the results of the project by examining each client’s experience, an analysis of the clients’ overall themes and action items, and making a composite assessment of the effectiveness of the Radical Coaching process.

Case Studies and Analyses

Client 1 “Sally”

Client 1 in the study was Sally, a middle-aged, blue-collar worker in the healthcare field.¹ Sally was punctual with her attendance the first coaching session, a trait that was consistent throughout the coaching sessions. At the beginning of the first

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¹ The names of the four clients in the study have been changed to preserve confidentiality.
session, I observed that Sally was timid. She seemed reluctant to maintain eye contact, spoke in a low tone, and was slow to answer questions. Her self-assurance grew progressively in the relationship (R) aspect of the Radical Coaching conversational flow in the session and in the sessions to follow because I devoted more time to establish and nurture a relationship with Sally through conversation, listening, and by praying specifically for her at the start of each session. Sally appeared frustrated and hesitant to respond to the open-ended questions asked in several of the sessions. An unrushed approach that allowed for self-reflection and inner listening was followed in each session and seemed to foster an increasing self-confidence in her self-perception to determine the actions needed to promote her faith development. In the final session, Sally appeared excited and confident in talking freely about her spiritual growth and what continuing action steps she would implement in growing her faith toward maturity after the study ended.

The topics that Sally selected in the coaching sessions focused primarily on nurturing relationship with herself and those closest to her. Inner insecurity, self-love, accepting and experiencing God’s love for her, and the tendency to choose “escapism” to avoid conflict with others were self-chosen session topics for determining action plans. Examples of comments made by Sally related to these topics include: (1) “I feel like I have no purpose in life.”² (2) “Because I am a divorcee, I sometimes feel like I am

² “Sally” Coaching session 1 transcript.
damaged goods. That I am worthless. That God cannot use me. I am not good enough.”

(3) “When others say kind things to me, I don’t know how to receive them.” (4) “I hate conflict. When a conflict occurs, my inner feeling is to run away. Run when things get tough.”

The goals and action steps that Sally decided on in the coaching sessions involved the spiritual disciplines of personal prayer, inner spiritual listening, scripture reading, and journaling. Each action plan created included the step of spending daily, dedicated time with God in prayer for the purpose of asking and hearing the Voice Within about the session topic. About the topic of self-love, Sally decided to spend dedicated time praying and listening to the Voice Within for revelation of how God loved her so that she could better love herself and others. An action step she determined in the second coaching session that became a habit for the remainder of the study was to spend the lunch hour during the week in her automobile so that she could be isolated from co-workers to pray, read scripture, and listen inwardly. She also chose to dedicate time in the evenings at her home to pray, listen, and to journal about her conversations with God. Her journaling included both audio and written notes that she typically reviewed on Sunday afternoons. Occasionally, family responsibilities, guests, or work-related factors hindered her

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3 “Sally” Coaching session 2 transcript.

4 “Sally” Coaching session 3 transcript.

5 “Sally” Coaching Session 5 transcript.

6 “Sally” Coaching Session 3 transcript.
journaling, but she maintained consistency throughout the project of making an effort to record her relational experience with God. Her selection for scripture reading was randomly chosen. Scripture mentioned in sermons at her church or biblical texts emphasized at discipleship-related training in which she participated were also helpful in her biblical readings.

Sally chose journaling as her primary means of accountability for implementing her action plan in each of the coaching sessions. She also decided to set alarm notifications on her phone to remind her that it was time for prayer, inner listening, reflection, and journaling. Sally decided to post notes in specific locations within her home to aid in keeping her focus on the action steps she had created as part of following through with the action items. Even in taking these measures, there were a few days when she did not follow through with her action steps; however, overall her use of these accountability measures helped her to develop the desired habits of praying, listening, and journaling during the study.

In order to discover Sally’s self-perception of satisfaction with her faith development on an on-going basis, early in each coaching session, she was asked to give a numerical response to the scaling question, “On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, how do you feel about your current rate of spiritual growth?” Her response was “7” in the initial coaching session. When asked the scaling question in her final coaching session, again she responded with “7.” Her responses to the scaling
question indicate that her satisfaction with her rate of spiritual growth during the study remained constant.

During the entrance interview, Sally mentioned that early in her faith journey she attended a church that taught a legalistic, law-based dogma that seldom mentioned the Holy Spirit and never mentioned anything about listening to the Voice Within and the freedom that comes from living a Spirit-led life. Adherence to a church-determined pattern of behavior was the emphasis as opposed to living in an on-going intimate relationship with God. Later when she began attending GCWC, she stated that she was exposed to grace-based teachings that made her aware of the Holy Spirit’s activity. In the exit interview, when asked the greatest strength of the Radical Coaching conversational process, she stated,

Being involved in the coaching sessions using the Radical Coaching process has helped me to be more aware of God’s presence with and in me. It has made me more aware of the Holy Spirit’s presence and voice within me and has greatly encouraged me and helped me to think deeper and clarify what actions I need to take to continue growing as a Christian.7

When asked in the exit interview what self-determined action step she felt was most significant for facilitating her perception of faith development during the study, she stated that journaling thoughts related to living and acting in intimacy with God were most impactful. In summing up her response, she stated, “Through spending time alone with God praying, listening, and journaling, God has reminded me so many times that I need to trust His life in me, look to the Holy Spirit for guidance, and to take action based on

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7 “Sally” Exit Interview transcript.
what He reveals to me.”

When asked if she would be willing to participate in future coaching using the Radical Coaching process, Sally stated: “Yes, with no hesitation or reservation!”

Client 2 “Gracie”

Gracie has recently retired. She stated that retirement has left her with a lack of life purpose and feeling somewhat stagnant in her walk with God. From the initial coaching session and in the sessions to follow, Gracie was talkative and tended to move quickly from one subject of conversation to another. One of the challenges I faced as coach was to re-focus her thoughts and conversation on the topics or issues she introduced into the sessions without influencing her with my personal opinions. The use of open-ended and scaling questions in each session fostered Gracie’s critical thinking skills and clarified which subjects she wanted to explore in depth. In most sessions, the Radical Coaching conversational flow took more of a circular pattern than a linear one as the topics, goals, and action steps were often explored multiple times to determine direction. Of particular concern in every coaching session was Gracie’s determination not to allow her self-chosen action steps and associated accountability to become legalistic factors that would become an obstacle to her understanding of living a grace-based life. In all of the sessions, Gracie’s excitement and eagerness to enhance her spiritual growth

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8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 “Gracie” Entrance Interview transcript.
were observable to the coach by her engagement in the conversations, facial expressions, and eagerness to commit to implementing the self-determined action plans once she had created them.

The topics for Gracie’s coaching sessions centered on experiencing a sense of intimacy in prayer and learning to better listen for guidance from the Voice Within in the context of interceding and serving others based on God’s perspective of the person, issue, and circumstances. In session 2, she stated, “My desire is to experience God and others in a deeper relationship to better allow the Spirit to involve me in serving others, especially as it relates to prayer.”11 The thread throughout her coaching sessions was enhancing relationships both vertically with God and horizontally with family and friends, several of which were going through a difficult season in life.

Gracie selected goals and action steps in the sessions that focused on enriching her intimacy with God and increasing her ability to serve others from a spiritual perspective. She said,

I want to believe that God is accomplishing His work in and through me in ministry to others. My desire is to intentionally deepen my relationship with the Spirit so that I can deepen my relationship with those God has brought into my life. I also want that for new people God will bring my way today or in the future.12

Each action plan created during the study included maintaining a dedicated time alone with God each morning to listen inwardly for God’s perspective of herself, family

11 “Gracie” Coaching Session 2 transcript.

12 “Gracie” Coaching Session 3 transcript.
members, and friends. Gracie consistently selected scripture reading, meditation, and journaling as action steps throughout the study. Her action plans also included scheduling time to meet with specific friends to enhance the quality of their friendship. Spiritual connection was a significant part of all of her session action plans. In session 5, Gracie’s topic related to a better understanding of how to live a grace-filled life. The session’s goals and action steps were tempered with the relationship component as she decided she wanted to ask her pastor for an appointment to ask questions about the concept of “hyper-grace” and how to live a balanced grace-based life.

Near the beginning of each session, I asked Gracie to indicate her feeling of satisfaction with her current rate of spiritual growth, with 10 being highest and 1 indicating the lowest sense of satisfaction. Her responses ranged from 2 to 10 for an overall average of 4.6 for the study. She explained her lowest numerical response,

> It has been raining so much lately without almost any sunshine. I think that I am a little depressed right now. Probably the biggest reason I said 2 is related to my expectations. My walk with God has not gone as I thought it would have this past couple of weeks.\(^\text{13}\)

The wide variance in her perception of satisfaction with her rate of faith development relates to the ups and downs of life. Most significantly, the variance indicates Gracie’s transparency to state her feelings accurately and serves as a testimony of her value to the study.

In the entrance interview, Gracie struggled with the term “spiritual growth.” She stated, “I don’t think I like that term. It’s too vague. It is a term just casually used in

\(^{13}\) “Gracie” Coaching Session 5 transcript.
church but seems to lack meaning. I think I prefer the term ‘growing in grace or growing in Him’”\(^{14}\) She stated in the exit interview that her views about the term “spiritual growth” had not changed. Gracie indicated that she had experienced times of spiritual stagnation in her faith development that lasted for months. When asked what she felt contributed to those times of stagnation, she responded that she later realized she had become sporadic in her bible study, lax in praying, and was devoting little or no time in listening to the heart of God and others. She commented,

> It was so easy for me to get involved with the demands of my job, that I didn’t take time to build a relationship with God or those around me. My involvement with people outside of the context of what the job required became almost non-existent and was shallow even with those who worked on the job with me daily.\(^{15}\)

In response to the scaling question about her perception of the satisfaction with her current rate of faith development at the time of the Entrance Interview, she stated 3 primarily because, with entering retirement, she felt like she was “beginning again.”\(^{16}\) When asked the same scaling question in the final coaching session, she responded with 5. In explaining the difference in her responses, Gracie said,

> I feel like participating in the coaching sessions has turned on a light in me to see where my relationship with God and others was at. The action plans I created in the sessions helped me to gain clarity and has provided me with some spiritual markers for continuing to grow.\(^{17}\)

\(^{14}\) “Gracie” Entrance Interview transcript.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) “Gracie” Exit Interview transcript.
When asked to identify the most significant action step she implemented that contributed to her increase in satisfactory feelings about her rate of spiritual growth, she stated that developing the daily habit of spending dedicated time alone with God to pray and listen to the Holy Spirit early in her day has been life-changing.

Determining specific accountability was a difficult factor in each of the coaching sessions due to Gracie’s concept of the term “accountability.” Her concern was that she would slip into a legalistic mindset in her faith journey. In the first coaching session, after taking a few moments to list some possibilities, reflect, and listen to her Voice Within, she determined that keeping a prayer journal was the best approach along with sharing her action plans with a close friend who would call her periodically to inquire about how well she was following through with her action items. She chose these methods of accountability in each of the following sessions and periodically shared comments from her conversations with the friend she selected during a session’s conversational flow.

In the Exit Interview, Gracie gave a response of 7 out of 10, with 10 being high and 1 being low, regarding her overall level of satisfaction with her rate of growth using the Radical Coaching process in the study. She stated that she felt the continuity of the questions asked in the conversational flow helped her to relax during the sessions and also anticipate what to expect in the next coaching session. When asked if she would

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18 “Gracie” Coaching Session 1 transcript.
volunteer to participate in the Radical Coaching process again, she stated, “Yes, to periodically assess where I am in growth in my faith and ministry to others.”

Client 3 “Paxton”

Paxton, the third client, is a middle-aged male employed in the industrial maintenance field. From the entrance interview to the exit interview, Paxton demonstrated a high level of interest in spiritual growth. He was always punctual for coaching sessions, eager to engage in the sessions’ conversational flow, and often had selected his desired topics, goals, and action steps before the beginning of a session. One of the traits that Paxton developed over the three months of coaching was an awareness of potential open-ended questions that should be asked in the conversation. In several sessions, he asked a question of himself as if he was both coach and client before stating his response. For example, in conversing on the subject of sharing his faith in Christ with others, he said,

I want to become more conscious of telling others about Jesus as I go about my day. Mark, before you ask how would I go about that or what would that look like to me, I think that I would use the t-shirt collection that I have that has a printed scripture or message on them as a conversation starter. I also think making an effort to just make a simple statement to whoever I meet in a store or restaurant, like ‘Jesus loves you’ or ‘Have a blessed day’ would be helpful in sharing my faith.

Paxton’s enthusiasm for spiritual growth, eagerness to engage in the Radical Coaching conversational process in each session, and his advance preparation to determine the

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19 “Gracie” Exit Interview transcript.

20 “Paxton” Coaching Session 3 transcript.
topic, goals, and action steps before several coaching sessions contributed to his overall response of 9 to the scaling question asked in the final minutes of each session, “On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being highest, what is your commitment to implement the action plan you have created in this session?”

The topics, goals, and action steps that Paxton chose in the coaching sessions centered on the spiritual disciplines of personal prayer, scripture reading, witnessing, and worship. In speaking about personal prayer, he said, “I want to become more aware of prayer during my day, especially while I am at work.” The action steps that he created to implement his desire to develop an awareness of prayer were to establish a dedicated time and location to pray, ask his spouse to pray with him each morning before he left for work, and to set alarms on his phone at two-hour intervals during the day as a reminder to stop his work activity for a moment of prayer.

In a subsequent coaching session, Paxton’s desired topic focused on becoming consistent in scripture reading. His goal was to meditate daily on the “verse of the day” using an app on his phone and to dedicate at least an hour each evening studying scripture at home. In reviewing his implementation of these action steps, Paxton said that he had more consistency with meditating on the “verse of the day” than dedicating an hour daily to read scripture at home due to unexpected guests or tasks that required his attention.

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21 “Paxton” Coaching Session 1 transcript.

22 Ibid.
Overall, when asked a scaling question about how satisfied he felt with his rate of spiritual growth after becoming more consistent in reading scripture daily, he reported an 8 out of 10, with 10 being identified as the highest level and 1 the lowest level of satisfaction.23

In coaching session 3, Paxton’s chosen topic was a desire to be bolder in sharing his faith in Christ in the businesses, factories, restaurants, and stores that he visits. His goal was to tell two people each day that Jesus loved them and to speak a blessing over each person. He said,

My wife often speaks a blessing to people we meet at the store or restaurant. After she pays the cashier, she will say, ‘Have a blessed day.’ I want to do that too and maybe add, ‘Jesus loves you.’ I think that might lead to a deeper conversation about Jesus.24

In determining the action steps to implement the goal to share his faith, Paxton decided that his collection of faith-related t-shirts could visually reinforce his verbal efforts to introduce his faith into conversations. In the fifth coaching session, Paxton’s topic was about worship, and his goal was to write a contemporary song based on 2 Samuel 22. For many years, he performed in bands in nightclubs and other venues as a musician and now plays in GCWC’s worship band. In explaining his reason for selecting the topic and desire to write a song, he said,

For years, I played in a band and even wrote some songs. I haven’t done any songwriting for years, but I would like to try and write a worship song. I was reading in 2 Samuel this week and felt inspired, so that is what I want to work

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23 “Paxton” Coaching Session 2 transcript.

24 “Paxton” Coaching Session 3 transcript.
toward in the next few weeks. Music has always been important to me and it feels natural to connect it with our Radical Coaching sessions.\textsuperscript{25}

In the final coaching session in the study, Paxton used his guitar to play and sing through a draft of the song he is creating.

Paxton entered the study with a high interest in the subject of spiritual growth; however, he indicated that his satisfaction with his current rate of spiritual growth was a 5, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest level of satisfaction.\textsuperscript{26} When asked if he had experienced a time when he felt stagnated in spiritual growth, he indicated that he had experienced seasons of feeling static on numerous occasions that would last for several weeks at a time. In the exit interview, when asked to provide his current satisfaction with his rate of spiritual growth he responded with 8.5, with 10 being the highest level. When questioned to explain the change in his perception of spiritual growth, he commented,

In praying, I have learned to ask the Holy Spirit how to grow and listen for His response. The action plans that were created in the coaching sessions have really helped me to become more focused and consistent in my walk with God.\textsuperscript{27}

When asked if he would volunteer to participate in future sessions using the Radical Coaching process, he responded immediately, “Yes, because I feel like I have grown so much during these past three months.”\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{25} “Paxton” Coaching Session 5 transcript.

\textsuperscript{26} “Paxton” Entrance Interview transcript.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
Client 4 “Joella”

Joella was the fourth client in the study. At the beginning of the study, she was an unemployed white-collar executive who had recently returned to Hogansville. In the final week of the study, she accepted a new executive position in a large metropolitan city to lead in work-force development. Her responsiveness to questions in the coaching process was indicative of a self-confident, decisive leader who is experienced at creating and implementing action plans. In each session, Joella was fully engaged, assertive, made quick decisions, and approached each topic, goal, and action step with critical thinking skills.

Joella indicated a high level of satisfaction (8 with 10 being the highest level) with her current rate of spiritual growth in the entrance interview, but also stated that she had experienced numerous times in the past when she felt stagnated in her faith development. Sometimes these seasons of feeling static lasted two or three months. She commented,

I have always tried to keep God at the center of life, but I have experienced times when my focus on work took away from my time to spend with Him. I think that I have always tried to keep a conversation going with the Holy Spirit throughout my day, but occasionally the demands on the job hindered my ability to listen as closely as I would have preferred.29

The topics that Joella chose during the series of coaching sessions were all focused on issues related to her inner self in connection with the Voice Within. For

29 “Joella” Entrance Interview transcript.
example, in session 1 her chosen topic was the awareness of feeling an inner battle with hesitation in implementing decisions. She stated,

I am not sure why I sometimes hesitate to move forward with a decision I have made. Maybe it is fear, but I don’t think so. I am not afraid of failure. You will never succeed if you are not willing to risk failure. I do not see myself as a procrastinator. I think maybe it’s that I don’t want to hurt relationships with friends and acquaintances.30

Her goals and actions steps for the two weeks following the session were to schedule meetings with several individuals to discuss her knowledge and experience in the workforce development field. Another topic in a subsequent coaching session was “learning to live and rest in the questions of my life, instead of feeling I must have all the answers before I move forward.”31 Her goals and action steps for this topic involved setting aside a daily dedicated time for prayer for the primary purpose of listening to the Voice Within. In the implementation review of her action plan, Joella reported, “I asked Him one morning early this week, ‘Am I waiting on you or are you waiting on me?’ I heard God respond, ‘I am waiting on you.’”32

In the exit interview, Joella expressed the highest level (10) of satisfaction with her current rate of spiritual growth. She stated that her involvement in the Radical Coaching process had helped her to

engage in introspection, to pay attention to what is happening within me and listen better to the Holy Spirit…The conversational process of being asked open-ended

30 “Joella” Coaching Session 1 transcript.

31 “Joella” Coaching Session 2 transcript.

32 “Joella” Coaching Session 3 transcript.
questions and scaling questions has helped me to listen to both myself and God and move forward.33

When asked if she would volunteer to participate in future coaching sessions using the Radical Coaching process, she quickly responded, “Absolutely, yes! Who wouldn’t want to continue with these sessions?”34 Joella added that she was planning to use the Radical Coaching conversational flow when working with her staff in her new position at work.

Larger Analysis

A larger analysis of the study reveals several common themes and action steps determined by the clients. In addition, a comprehensive analysis of clients’ responses in the interviews indicates factors before study participation and at the conclusion of the three-month study that shed light on the clients’ overall satisfaction with their faith development. A report of the self-analysis of my coaching will also be included. Finally, an analysis of the clients’ experience with the Radical Coaching conversational flow as it relates to spiritual growth is essential to the study’s analysis.

Action Items

The action items chosen by the clients during the coaching sessions connect with numerous spiritual disciplines. The clients’ selected spiritual practices include listening prayer, intercessory prayer, practicing the presence of God, resting in God, journaling, discernment of God’s guidance, waiting with God, Bible study, witnessing, worship,

33 “Joella” Exit Interview transcript.

34 Ibid.
submission to God, enlisting an accountability partner, and living in spiritual community.\textsuperscript{35} A brief description of each practice is given in the following table.

Table 2. Spiritual Disciplines\textsuperscript{36}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual Practice</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening Prayer</td>
<td>To quiet the inner and outer noise so I can open my heart and listen for God’s voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercessory Prayer</td>
<td>To turn my concerns and worries into prayer; to enter God’s heart for the world and then pray from there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing the Presence</td>
<td>To develop a continual openness and awareness of Christ’s presence living in me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>To honor God and my human limitations through restful rhythms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discernment</td>
<td>To delight in and recognize the voice and will of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible study</td>
<td>To know what the Bible says and how it intersects with my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>To be alert to my life through writing and reflecting on God’s presence and activity in, around, and through me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td>To patiently trust in God’s goodness and timing in the events and relationships in my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>To reveal the life-changing love of Jesus to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>To honor and adore the Trinity as the supreme treasure of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission</td>
<td>To have Jesus the Master of my life in absolutely every way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability partner</td>
<td>To give a regular and honest account of my choices, priorities and temptations to a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{35} The researcher has used spiritual director and pastor Adelle Calhoun’s \textit{Spiritual Disciplines Handbook} to identify and analyze the clients’ spiritual practices chosen during the study.

\textsuperscript{36} All spiritual practices and definitions are taken from Calhoun’s \textit{Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us}. 
The practices chosen most often by the clients to include in their action plans during the three-month study were listening prayer, practicing the presence, discernment, journaling, and community.

Table 3. Clients’ Most Chosen Spiritual Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening Prayer</td>
<td>16 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing the Presence</td>
<td>11 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discernment</td>
<td>10 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>7 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>5 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflecting on the frequent selection of these five spiritual practices, these clients placed a significant value on being aware of God’s presence with them, hearing and discerning God’s voice, and living in spiritual community with others. The choice to journal their experiences with God, self, and others also indicates a desire to record their faith journey for later review and additional reflection. The connective factor in each of these five practices is a desire to have an intimate relationship with God that is centered on living with cognizance of God’s presence and actively listening and discerning God’s guidance.

Interviews

In the entrance and exit interviews, clients defined spiritual growth using different wording, but the overall definition remained centered on a progressive inner growth that resulted in the Holy Spirit manifesting Christ’s life and ministry in a Christian. When...
asked in the entrance interview to respond to a scaling question stating “how important is
spiritual growth to you,” where 10 is the highest level, three of the clients stated “10”
with the remaining client stating “9.” The clients’ value concerning personal spiritual
growth accounts for the consistency in being punctual for coaching sessions and each
client’s high level of participation in the conversational flow. When asked the same
scaling question regarding self-perception of the importance of spiritual growth in the
exit interview, all four clients responded with “10.” The clients’ exit interview responses
indicate that their value of spiritual growth did not wane during the study but remained
constant with a slight overall increase.

In the entrance interview, all four clients indicated that their faith journey
included seasons when they felt stagnated and dissatisfied with their faith development.
When asked how long the season of feeling static in their faith development lasted, client
responses varied but all indicated months. During the season of stagnation, clients stated
that attention to spiritual disciplines and church participation was sporadic at best. The
fact that all four clients had experience with spiritual stagnation that lasted for months
aligns with research mentioned earlier in the study regarding the widespread occurrence
of inner walls or gaps that hinder spiritual growth. None of the clients in the study
indicated that they were currently experiencing a season of stagnation in growth before,
during, or at the conclusion of the coaching sessions.
Self-Analysis of the Coach

As part of the observation notes written at the end of each coaching session, I wrote about my self-perception as the coach during the session. The self-analysis centered on my attentiveness to the client, my quality of listening to the client, my effectiveness in asking open-ended and scaling questions, and my overall success in following the Radical Coaching conversational flow in the session. For the most part, my attentiveness during the sessions remained constant except for sporadic interruptions in the session caused by internet disruptions. When the video conference was interrupted due to a weak or broken internet connection, my attentiveness to the client and conversational flow was weakened due to my efforts to re-establish the connectivity of the signal. Overall, I had no difficulty in remaining in an active listening state as I enjoyed listening to each of the clients as they sought to clarify what direction they sensed the Voice Within was leading them to move. On numerous occasions, periods of silence occurred as clients’ listened to the Voice Within or contemplated what goal or action might be best to take to accomplish the self-desired goal. The times of silence enhanced my ability to focus on attentiveness to the client and my Voice Within.

One of the significant issues that I experienced in many coaching sessions was the temptation to offer advice to the client. As a pastor for over thirty years, I became aware of an inner drive to “fix” people by drawing from my biblical knowledge and life experiences. Sporadically throughout the coaching sessions, I engaged in an inner struggle to be faithful in a coaching role instead of moving to a consultant, pastoral,
mentor, or counselor role. In most sessions, remaining consistent with the Radical Coaching conversational flow enabled me to ask timely, open-ended questions of clients. In reflecting on a coaching session, periodically I realized that I could have better stated a question or asked additional questions that might have enhanced the client’s ability to think through a subject.

In the first session, the Radical Coaching conversational flow seemed rigid instead of fluid. After a few coaching sessions, the conversational flow began to seem natural, and the transitions to each segment of the conversational process became easier. One of the unexpected aspects of the project was how some clients became so familiar and comfortable with the conversational flow that they began to ask and answer open-ended and scaling questions during sessions. Clients’ acceptance and adoption of the conversational flow created a relaxed, safe environment that enhanced transparency, creativity, and relationship.

The Radical Coaching Conversational Flow

An analysis of the Radical Coaching Conversational Flow by clients indicates that the coaching process was successful in facilitating an increased self-perceived satisfaction with spiritual growth. Each client was asked to respond to the scaling question, “On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 being lowest, how would you rate your satisfaction with the Radical Coaching process to facilitate ongoing spiritual growth in your life?” Collectively, the clients’ response to the scaling question was “8.75.” The high value that each client placed on their experience using the Radical
Coaching conversational flow aligns with all four clients stating in the exit interview that they would volunteer again to participate in a future coaching experience that utilized the same conversational flow.

In response to the exit interview question regarding the strengths of Radical Coaching conversational flow, students gave numerous answers. Sally stated that the conversational flow helped her to gain clarity about her rate of spiritual growth, receive encouragement and accountability to implement the action items she chose, and made her more aware of and able to hear the Voice Within. Gracie said the greatest strength of the conversational flow used in the coaching sessions was the continuity of conversation. She stated that knowing the conversational flow that the sessions would follow gave her a sense of inner confidence that allowed her to listen deeper to the Voice Within. Gracie also mentioned that the two-week intervals between sessions gave her time to implement the action items without feeling inner stress. The final strength Gracie stated was the value she had received during the study through a deepened relationship with an accountability partner she selected. The strengths of the Radical Coaching process for Paxton include encouragement, deepened relationships with God and others, and a greater desire and boldness to speak to strangers about his faith. In stating the strengths of the Radical Coaching process, Joella said that the conversational flow helped her to

37 “Sally” Exit Interview transcript.

38 “Gracie” Exit Interview transcript.

39 “Paxton” Exit Interview transcript.
feel that each session was “a safe place to listen and experience the Holy Spirit speaking to you.” Two clients, Gracie and Joella also stated that the use of the Action Plan Worksheet was beneficial as a tool for reflection and follow through with the action items created in the sessions. The strengths reported by the clients when analyzed collectively confirm the significance of facilitating and building relationship in the beginning and throughout coaching sessions.

Clients were also asked in the exit interview, “What are the greatest weaknesses of the Radical Coaching process?” Gracie and Paxton stated that the video-conferencing modality was a weakness, but from different viewpoints. In several of Paxton’s coaching sessions, stormy weather resulted in a loss of signal strength that caused the video to freeze and the audio to experience a delay. The interruptions in video and audio consistency did not prevent the sessions from following the Radical Coaching conversational flow, but it was distracting for the client and the coach. Gracie’s concern with the video-conferencing modality was not related to sporadic internet interruptions. She felt that the coaching sessions would have been more effective in a live, face-to-face setting as opposed to video conferencing. The clients stated no other weaknesses. After reflection, questions in the exit interview related to video-conferencing modality would have been helpful in gaining a better understanding of the clients’ perspective. Overall, I believe the video-conferencing modality was effective and allowed for flexibility when

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40 “Joella” Exit Interview transcript.
scheduling coaching sessions. Future choice of this modality for coaching sessions will need to explore clients’ internet speed and comfort with technology.

Analyzing the clients’ feedback of satisfaction with the Radical Coaching process collectively, the key aspect of the Radical Coaching conversational flow is relationship (R). Taking time at the beginning of each coaching session to connect vertically with God and horizontally with the clients was paramount. I began each session with a prayer asking and listening for the Voice Within the coach and the client to guide forward movement in faith development. On a couple of occasions, one of the clients accepted my invitation to lead the prayer at the beginning of the session. In most instances, by leading the prayer myself, I was able to demonstrate listening prayer for the client. In numerous sessions, extra time was devoted to nurturing the relationship between the client and God and the client and myself. I believe this action encouraged the clients to take whatever time was needed to listen to the Voice Within in determining action items, accountability, and the review of how clients followed through with action items. The relationship (R) aspect of the Radical Coaching conversational flow created “the atmosphere” that fostered the remaining segments of the session’s conversation.

The Radical Coaching conversational flow was created to facilitate a self-perception of faith development in clients. Overall, the clients’ responses in the exit interview indicates that the Radical Coaching conversational flow was successful in helping clients to maintain or gain a sense of progression in spiritual growth. The emphasis on attentively listening to the Voice Within for direction and the creation of
action items to help with movement in faith development proved to be beneficial for all four clients in the study. The remaining issue, to be explored in the next chapter, is how can the Radical Coaching process be used with others to enhance spiritual growth.
CHAPTER 5

THE RADICAL COACHING PROCESS MOVING FORWARD

Just as physical growth is typical, spiritual growth is a normal aspect of life. The Radical Coaching process was created to promote a self-perception of forward movement in clients in the context of spiritual growth. The previous chapter detailed the experiences of four clients who were coached for three months using the Radical Coaching process. The data suggest that the Radical Coaching process is successful in facilitating a feeling of satisfaction related to an increased rate in spiritual growth. This chapter summarizes the study and explores avenues for future use of the Radical Coaching process.

Conclusions of the Study

At the conclusion of the coaching sessions, clients precisely stated that the Radical Coaching process was beneficial to their perception of feelings of satisfaction regarding spiritual growth. In the exit interview, clients indicated that the Radical Coaching conversational flow had been helpful in enhancing their ability to listen to the Voice Within and to take action based on what they heard inwardly. The conversational flow increased clients’ focus on taking ownership, in cooperation with the Voice Within, of their faith development. The result was a self-perceived satisfaction with their spiritual growth rather than a feeling of stagnation.

The use of open-ended and scaling questions during the sessions in the context of faith development was an atypical practice for the clients. The clients were more
acquainted with sermonic and didactic approaches that may include rhetorical questions but did not include questions that called for deeper level thinking and inner listening. Joella stated, “The type of questions you asked in the coaching sessions allowed the Holy Spirit to guide me in making decisions. Instead of being taught by an instructor, the coaching process you followed created an openness for the Holy Spirit to speak through me.”

The study demonstrates the significance that spiritual practices can have in enhancing faith development. The topics and spiritual disciplines that were selected by the clients were not new to them. The conversational flow served to connect the clients to thinking deeper about spiritual practices and how these practices might enrich spiritual growth on a personal level. The creation of action plans with some form of accountability encouraged clients to engage in the selected spiritual practices rather than have just having “good intentions” to do so “one day.”

Surprises in the Study

There were several surprises in the study for the researcher. The discovery of these unanticipated aspects of the study does not devalue the Radical Coaching process. Instead, the surprises add value to the future use of the Radical Coaching process by highlighting the importance of the Relationship (R) segment of the conversational flow, the impact of the coach’s inner reflection and connection with the Voice Within, and the use of the Action Plan Worksheet for clients.

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1 “Joella” Exit Interview transcript.
The Relational Factor

The significance of the Relationship (R) segment of the Radical Coaching process for the clients was surprising to the researcher. While I knew that relationships play a significant role in life, the feedback from the clients demonstrates that time given to establishing and nurturing relationships, both vertically and horizontally, is time well invested. The effort and quality of the conversation in the Relationship segment of the coaching session was crucial to the overall ease and creativity of the client in determining topics, goals, action items, and means of accountability. Visually, a more accurate display of the Radical acronym would have a larger font size R to indicate the priority that relationship has to the success of the coaching process.

Intimate Intercession

By design, prayer was included at the beginning and end of each coaching session. While clients were given the opportunity to audibly lead these prayer times, in almost every session I voiced the prayer with the permission of the clients. In praying, my goal was to foster a connection to the Voice Within for the coach and client. The reaction of the clients to the demonstration of and participation in listening prayer was surprising to the researcher. Gracie commented,

Perhaps the greatest strength of the coaching process has been the way you as a coach has made an effort to listen to the Holy Spirit in voicing your prayers for me before and after each session. Your connection to the Spirit encouraged me to listen for the Spirit speaking to me.²

² “Gracie” Exit Interview transcript.
The client’s response to intimate intercession grounded in listening prayer confirms the continuation of this practice in seeking to connect the coach and client relationally to God and each other.

The Action Plan Worksheet

The creation of the Action Plan Worksheet (Appendix C) was not a forethought in planning the study. The Action Plan Worksheet was created by myself to record the content and flow of the coaching sessions for my review and later analysis. After each session, I sent clients an email copy of what I had written during the sessions seeking the clients’ approval for accuracy. My effort in creating and using the Action Plan Worksheet was coach-focused with little thought about how the worksheet might be beneficial to the clients. Gracie and Joella’s comments in the exit interview about the value of receiving the Action Plan Worksheet after each session suggests that the use and practice of sending the worksheet to clients after coaching sessions should become standard practice in future Radical Coaching opportunities.

Impact of the Radical Coaching Process

The three-month study using the Radical Coaching process has been insightful and enjoyable for the researcher. Creating a coaching process was a challenging and rewarding endeavor, but the fruit of the effort has come in coaching clients using the Radical Coaching process. The benefit for the researcher-coach has both a personal aspect as well as a vocational aspect.
Researcher-Coach

As a minister and instructor for decades, creating and using the Radical Coaching process has been very rewarding. The work of creating the Radical Coaching process was challenging but fit well within my previous roles in ministry and education. Creating and structuring sermons have become second-nature as a minister with over forty years of preaching experience. My current employment in instructional design at a Christian university made the designing process seem natural. I do not want to belittle the value of the creating and designing aspect of the Radical Coaching process, but the most significant value to the researcher has been serving as the coach in the study. Encouraging clients to listen to the Voice Within has facilitated a desire to listen more closely to that Voice in my faith journey. Asking questions of clients in the creation of action plans to encourage a feeling of advancement in faith development has challenged me to explore my satisfaction with my rate of spiritual growth. Observing clients select and follow up with action items has moved me to seek the Voice Within to help me to create action items for my movement toward feeling a greater sense of spiritual maturity. The relational aspect of the study has enriched my relationship with God, the four clients, and opened my thoughts to deeper engagement with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

Researcher’s Vocation

As an adjunct instructor in Biblical Studies and Christian Ministry at a Christian university, the insights that I have gained from the study have been helpful in rethinking
my instructional approach. I have realized the high value of investing time in establishing and nurturing relationships vertically and horizontally. After now, I begin and end each class with prayer and have begun to incorporate a brief time for listening prayer to connect and demonstrate the need to be aware of and listen to the Voice Within before engaging the academic aspect of the class. I have also realized the value of timely, well-stated, open-ended and scaling questions in the classroom. Instead of providing the answers for the students, I am learning the significance of seasons of silence and a greater effort to engage in active listening with students. The results of these adjustments in my approach to teaching are well-received by students, and student excitement and participation in class discussions have increased.

Future Use of the Radical Coaching Process

The Radical coaching conversational flow process has many potential future uses. The Christian community can receive possible benefit by incorporating the process in a local church as well as broader context. There is also potential use of the Radical Coaching conversational flow outside of the context of spiritual growth that can be explored.

Grace Covenant Worship Center

Three of the clients in the study, Gracie, Joella, and Sally mentioned that the Radical Coaching process might be helpful as a follow up to GCWC’s discipleship training. At GCWC, attendees are invited to participate in discipleship training sessions offered on a quarterly basis. For the most part, these sessions follow a didactic
methodology with the goal of imparting biblical and spiritual content to participants including a question and answer component. The Radical Coaching conversational flow may be beneficial in assisting discipleship training participants to experience a sense of ownership of the content taught by creating self-determined action items, establishing accountability, and feeling a greater sense of self-satisfaction with spiritual growth. The church’s pastors will determine whether the Radical Coaching process will be used at GCWC after reviewing the results of the study with the researcher.

Wider Christian Community

Numerous potential uses of the Radical Coaching process for the wider Christian community exist including church leadership development, relationship with and leadership of church staff and key leaders, developing a church-based coaching ministry for parishioners as well as the community at large, and church-based education opportunities. The Radical Coaching conversational flow may be helpful in facilitating spiritual growth in pastors and other church leaders. After experiencing the Radical Coaching process, church educators may promote deeper thinking and a sense of student ownership for faith development. These possibilities may be part of a future study.

Different Contexts

This study has focused solely on the use of the Radical Coaching process in the context of spiritual growth. The coaching process could be adapted for use in other contexts, such as executive leadership. At the conclusion of the exit interview, Joella said that she was already using the Radical Coaching conversational flow with team members
in her new position in workforce development. How the Radical Coaching conversational flow could be adapted in the context of business settings where the conversation about faith-related issues is forbidden may be part of a future study.

My hope in creating the Radical Coaching process and sharing the findings of the study is that doing so will encourage more thought on how to foster spiritual growth beyond the sermonic and didactic methodologies. As the studies cited in this thesis indicate, a significant number of those who attend church are feeling a sense of stagnation in their spiritual growth. At best, these studies reveal that many Christians are not experiencing feelings of satisfaction with their faith development despite the plethora of church events, programs, and gifted speakers. At risk is continuing decline in church participation due to spiritual apathy.

One of the concerns going forward in the use of the Radical Coaching model is the need for training prior to implementation. Persons with none or little coaching experience would improve their use of the coaching skills included in the study by receiving training. Ministers who desire to use the Radical Coaching model should be careful to avoid practicing counseling, mentoring, or teaching in the context of coaching. As always, persons should practice within their area of expertise.

The Radical Coaching process offers hope for a different approach that may facilitate feelings of excitement and passion as clients experience spiritual growth. Christians experiencing the Radical Coaching approach, which focuses on listening to the Voice Within, may engage in “new” spiritual disciplines, such as listening prayer,
practicing God’s presence, and discernment. Involvement in these and other spiritual disciplines can help to establish a foundation for progressive movement through the stages of faith. A renewed excitement about faith development may reduce the number of parishioners reducing or abandoning church participation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL
Thursday, September 27, 2018

Mr. Cleo Mark Boyd
3001 Mercer University Drive,
James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology
Atlanta, GA 30341

RE: Exploration of "Radical Coaching" at Grace Covenant Worship Center (H1809227)

Dear Mr. Boyd:

On behalf of Mercer University's Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research, your application submitted on 13-Sep-2018 for the above referenced protocol was reviewed in accordance with Federal Regulations 71 CFR 56.110(b) and 65 CFR 46.110(b) (for expedited review) and was approved under category(ies) 07 per 63 FR 60364.

Your application was approved for one year of study on 27-Sep-2018. The protocol expires on 26-Sep-2019. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

Item(s) Approved:
A new student applicant for a qualitative study using observations, video recording of the coach sessions, and exit interviews to explore the potential efficacy of the "Radical Coaching" model in increasing self-perceived on spiritual growth in study participants.

NOTE: You MUST report any changes, injuries, or serious adverse events that occur to your subjects as a result of this study.

We at the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance are dedicated to providing the best service to our research community. As one of our investigators, we value your feedback and ask that you please take a moment to complete our Safer on Survey, and help us to improve the quality of our service.

It has been a pleasure working with you and we wish you much success with your project! If you need any further assistance, please feel free to contact our office.

Respectfully,

Ava Chambliss-Richardson, Ph.D., CIP, CM,
Director of Research Compliance
Member
Institutional Review Board

"Mercer University has adopted and agrees to conduct its clinical research studies in accordance with the International Conference on Harmonization’s (ICH) Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice."

Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance
Phone: 478-301-4101 | Email: DRC_Mercer@Mercer.edu | Fax: 478-301-3229
1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, Georgia 31207-0001
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT

Spiritual Growth: An Exploration of “Radical Coaching” at Grace Covenant Worship Center

You are being invited to be a volunteer participant in a research study. Before you consent to be a participant, please review and ask as many questions as you desire in order to fully understand what you are being asked to do.

Investigator

The investigator for this research study is Mark Boyd, a student in the Doctor of Ministry program at McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University. The faculty supervisor for this research is Dr. Denise Massey at McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University.

Purpose of the Research

This research study is designed to study participants’ self-perceived feelings of spiritual growth as a result of being involved in personal coaching sessions over a three-month period. Information gained from the study will be used to complete a project thesis as required in the Doctor of Ministry degree at McAfee School of Theology.
Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in six one-hour personal coaching sessions to be conducted by video conferencing over a three-month period scheduled between October 2018 and April 2019. Mark Boyd will be the coach for each session and each session will follow the Radical Coaching model that he has designed. At the end of each coaching session, you will be asked to complete and submit to the coach a copy of an action plan detailing the steps you intend to take as a result of the coaching session. You will also be asked to allow each video coaching session to be recorded by the coach and allow the coach to take notes on every coaching session as deemed appropriate. Last, you will be asked to participate in two semi-structured interviews with the coach, one at the beginning of the coaching sessions and the other at the end of the final coaching session in order to explore your perception of spiritual growth and the use of coaching to enhance faith development.

Potential Risks or Discomforts

The risks for this research are minimal. Some mild discomfort is possible depending on the content addressed in the coaching sessions. This potential discomfort will be limited due to fact that content during all coaching sessions will be subject-driven. The coach will not attempt to manipulate or force any conversation or actions deemed inappropriate by the study participant.

Potential Benefits of the Research
As a result of participating in this study, participants may gain a better understanding of
spiritual growth and acquire an increased self-perception of faith development. The study
results may also be used to evaluate the potential effectiveness of the Radical Coaching
model to facilitate spiritual growth as an ongoing ministry of the church.

Confidentiality and Data Storage
Maintaining strict confidentiality will be a top priority in the study. Video recordings,
action plans, coach’s notes, and interviews will be secured in a file locked by the
researcher for a period of three years.

Participation and Withdrawal
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate at any time
during the study. You may withdraw from the study by contacting the principle
investigator.

Questions About the Research
If you have questions about the research, please contact the researcher or Dr. Denise
Massey at McAfee School of Theology, 3001 Mercer University Drive, Atlanta, GA
30341-4115.

Reasons for Exclusion from this Study
All volunteer participants for this research study will be over the age of eighteen.
Because the modality of the coaching sessions and interviews will be video conferencing,
only participants with access to video conferencing technology (phone, computer, tablet,
etc.) will be accepted as study participants.
This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Mercer University. If you believe that there is any infringement upon your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chair of the IRB at (478) 301-4101.

You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and these have been answered to your satisfaction. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this research study.

__________________________________________  ____________
Signature of Research Participant                Date

__________________________________________  ____________
Signature of Principle Study Investigator        Date
APPENDIX C

ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET
APPENDIX C

ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

Radical Coaching Session Action Plan

Name: __________________  Date: ____________

Beginning Assessment: _______________________________________________________

Possible Session Subjects: ____________________________________________________

Selected Session Topic: _______________________________________________________

Brainstorming/Possibilities: ___________________________________________________
Goal(s):

Action Steps:

When:  | Where:  | Who:

Obstacles:

Accountability:
APPENDIX D

INTRODUCTORY MEETING AGENDA
APPENDIX D

Radical Coaching Project: Introductory Meeting Agenda

Introduction: Many Christians today are experiencing stagnation in spiritual growth as they discover that church participation is not a guarantee of adequate faith development. Instead, these church attendees are feeling a disconnection in their growth that might be described as an inner “wall” or “gap” that is hindering spiritual growth.

This project will consider coaching as a methodology to facilitate such maturity.

Project Details:

1. Begin with a brief introduction to coaching in distinction to counseling, mentoring, teaching, and spiritual direction.

2. Introduce the Radical Coaching Model and its distinctive conversational flow used in all coaching sessions.

3. How the study will be conducted including:
   a. the number of clients that will be selected for participation
   b. the modality for each session, each session recorded
   c. the number, frequency, and length of each session, and
   d. the use of an entrance and exit semi-structured interviews

4. Anticipate each session to focus on client-driven content, the use of open-ended and scaling questions, and the creation of a client-determined action plan with accountability at the conclusion of each coaching session.
   a. Copy of each action plan will be given to the coach for project analysis.
   b. Coach will take notes during the sessions and write up observation notes at the conclusion of each session for use in analysis of the project.

5. Question and answer segment for potential clients.

6. Informed Consent form will be reviewed with the potential clients with a request for completion and return to the researcher.
APPENDIX E
RADICAL COACHING ENTRANCE INTERVIEW

The entrance coaching interview has a semi-structured design allowing the interviewer flexibility and freedom to ask follow-up questions at any time in the interview to gain clarity of the responses being given.

1. How do you define “spiritual growth”?
   a. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, how important is spiritual growth to you?
   b. What does spiritual growth look like to you? If you are growing spiritually, what will be happening?
   c. How would you describe spiritual maturity? What does a spiritually mature person look like to you?
   d. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, what is your perception of your current rate of spiritual growth in relation to maturity?
   e. How do you know if you are experiencing spiritual growth?
   f. What are you doing now to encourage your spiritual growth and development?

2. Have you ever experienced a time when you were dissatisfied or felt stagnated in your spiritual growth?
   a. How long did this season of feeling static in your faith advancement last?
   b. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, what is the current level of satisfaction you are experiencing with your rate of spiritual development?
   c. If you felt stagnated in your faith advancement, what steps do you think might be helpful to begin growing spiritually again?
APPENDIX F

EXIT INTERVIEW
APPENDIX F

RADICAL COACHING EXIT INTERVIEW

The exit coaching interview has a semi-structured design allowing the interviewer flexibility and freedom to ask follow-up questions at any time in the interview to gain clarity of the responses being given.

1. How do you define “spiritual growth”?
   a. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, how important is spiritual growth to you?
   b. What does spiritual growth look like to you? If you are growing spiritually, what will be happening?
   c. How would you describe spiritual maturity? What does a spiritually mature person look like to you?
   d. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, what is your perception of your current rate of spiritual growth in relation to maturity?
   e. How do you know if you are experiencing spiritual growth?
   f. What are you doing now to encourage your spiritual growth and development?

2. Have you ever experienced a time when you were dissatisfied or felt stagnated in your spiritual growth?
   a. How long did this season of feeling static in your faith advancement last?
   b. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest, what is the current level of satisfaction you are experiencing with your rate of spiritual development?
   c. If you were to feel stagnated in your faith advancement, what steps do you think might be helpful to begin growing spiritually again?
3. How has the Radical Coaching process used in the coaching sessions affected your understanding of spiritual growth and discipleship?

4. How has the Radical Coaching process affected your connection with God and self as it relates to your spiritual development?

5. What actions did you decide to take based upon your action plans?

6. Which of these actions did you actually implement?

7. Which of these actions do you feel were most effective in encouraging your spiritual growth?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being highest and 1 being lowest, how would you rate your satisfaction with the Radical Coaching process to facilitate ongoing spiritual growth in your life?

9. What is the greatest strength of the Radical Coaching process? What is the greatest weakness of the Radical Coaching process?

10. Would you volunteer to participate in the Radical Coaching process again? Why or Why not?