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Self awareness

A life of choice?

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Purpose

This strategy helps a client to ensure they have made or are making a good career choice.

Description

We can meet clients who appear stressed and unhappy in their current role. They may be complaining of having no work/life balance. Often they express having little enthusiasm and low energy. This may indicate that they are ready for a choice point in their career. It can be helpful for the client to explore the original reasons for going into their chosen career, the strengths and capabilities they have and their hopes and dreams. The outcome of this focus is greater clarity about career choice and easier movement to action.

Process

The process starts by asking the client to think about how they chose their career. Were they influenced by family members, teachers at school? It is common to hear the client say things like 'I always wanted to be a . . .' or 'I never wanted to be a . . .' or 'My father/uncle/sister was a [xxx] and I was expected to follow'. It is helpful to focus on their feelings at different stages of their career – good and bad. Ask the client to think about what they would like to have done. Explore this and help them understand what is fuelling this idea.

What is their dream now? What would be the craziest career choice today? Encourage the client to be bold and creative. It will enable you to see where the passions and energies for this individual are. Pick up on those when you notice them and play them back to the client. Once the client has offered some alternatives it can be helpful to explore what of the current role is enjoyed now. What aspects are least enjoyed? What strengths does the individual have?

The final stage is to help the client to make some choices about actions to take. It is usual for them to have identified what it is about the current role that they are unhappy about and how they would prefer to be spending their energy. You can then help them to take some actions steps towards the role they would choose. A key for you as coach is to notice when the client's energy goes up as this is usually when they are thinking or imagining something important.

Pitfalls

None.