

Creative writing in Situation phase



Creative writing is not simply a coaching tool but a set of coaching tools, a guided writing exercise utilized both in team and individual coaching. Creative writing can be utilized at most stages of the SPARKLE Model, including the Situation phase.

Rather than addressing a topic in general terms and attempting to create a work of fiction, participants tackle the issue of self-awareness, as well as personal problems or other areas to be explored during writing. Through creative writing and its analysis, the coachee can unlock their intuitive, hidden, emotional side and starts to think out of the box.

GUIDED – This includes the purpose-oriented nature of this exercise. Writing is not solely a hobby; it also serves a purpose.

WRITING – The human brain functions differently when we speak or write. Writing facilitates to reveal one’s hidden thoughts and enables one to immerse himself or herself in the given topic. When writing, you think over what you wish to convey in a different manner. In the writing process, there is a different timeframe and a unique relationship between your thoughts and the manner in which you communicate them. Sometimes you write things that you would never have imagined. Your education and socially and morally-embedded habits may limit or influence you putting your thoughts down on paper. People tend to write what they think they are expected to or what they expect from themselves.

This writing exercise is aimed at capturing “first thoughts.” You must transcend a level of awareness in order to avoid writing down what you want – this is usually your second, third, or subsequent thought – and instead write what spontaneously comes to your mind. This facilitates the attainment of a deeper level of self-awareness.

EXERCISE – A tool for discussing issues and problems. It is applied writing.

How Creative Writing is Applied in practice

1. Defining the topic and the timeframe.
2. The coachee writes.
3. Processing the text from a particular aspect and analyzing the process of writing, i.e. how it affected the coachee's emotions.

Creative writing is recommended for use as a complementary tool. You can engage in it when seeking to introduce or close something or when experiencing difficulty in reviewing a process. You can also use it when the coachee is unaware of his or her feelings or his or her own approach to certain issues capable of resolution or when you wish to address self-awareness in a different manner than in a test. The writer will draw on his or her own experiences. Writing brings out one's intuitive, hidden, emotional side as opposed to one's organizational side that functioning through logical thinking.



A few practical tips:

- *Write by hand*, without being concerned about of paper and pen to be used. Establish a convenient setting for writing. The most important consideration is being able to write quickly with the pen you have in your hand. Nowadays clients sometimes find it strange and ask to do it not on their laptop or tablet but it is essential to write by hand.
- *Timeframe*: always set a timeframe for the coachee.
- *Always have a topic* defined by you or the coachee. Alternatively, if there is no topic, then you should identify a purpose and the coachee can write about anything.
- *You can make it as a daily exercise (as a homework)*: it is recommended that one write for 10 to 15 minutes every morning. Allow yourself a month for reading back what you wrote.
- *Keep writing...* without interruption. You need not use flowery language or write well. There are no spelling requirements. You must let yourself go and not think about what you want to write. It does not have to make sense; instead, you can jot down on paper thoughts that are only meaningful to you. You are not required to be logical; you can be absurd, awkward, humorous, unconventional, and the like.



- *Never plan* in advance what you are going to write.
- *You are not required to show* or read what you wrote. It can remain private. The purpose of the exercise is finding out what it inspired you to do and how you can put it to use.
- *Actually, you can write about anything.*
- For the first few times, it is a common occurrence for the coachee to have nothing to write about. *How can you find a topic?* Draw inspiration from your environment, e.g. start by describing the room in which you are sitting. There are topics that can be usually discussed by everyone, e.g. childhood, your daily routine, etc.
- If you experience writer's block, then simply write what is on your mind, i.e. "now I can't think of anything."

If you want to use this technique as a coaching tool, then you should try it in advance. You will then gain experience in analyzing your own writing. (A few topics are listed at the bottom of the description.) Furthermore, you will have experienced how it feels to be confused or fearful about the subject of your writing. It is recommended to write for at least one month, ideally, on a daily basis. You need not wait for a grand inspiration or brilliant thoughts to emerge. The aim is not to produce a masterpiece. By the same token, you may write on the topic of your choice and may also write a text that is meaningless and serves no purpose.



Example, step by step:

The process of assigning a written task to the coachee could be the following.

After clarifying the type of writing you expect, provide him or her with the following instructions:

- I. Imagine that a year has passed. This period has been ideal in every aspect, with everything having been accomplished and all that you had wished for having come true. Also, you had a stroke of luck (it must be realistic, i.e. avoid mentioning winning the lottery). Describe what happened. Then, set a time frame ranging from ten and thirty minutes.

- II. If completed, assign the next task without discussing the prior one: Consider how you achieved the point that you wrote about in one/five years. *What efforts did you make to achieve it? What steps did you take?* Then set a timeframe that should not be shorter than in the previous task.

III. Processing the text. Raise questions and set points of reference:

1. *How did you deal with this topic? If it was difficult – why? How did you find the period of one year/five years – was it too close, too far out, too long? How do you normally carry out the planning? Do you plan at all? If the coachee disliked the topic, then you should discuss the reasons.*
2. *Did the coachee accomplish anything by writing? Are there new things on his or her mind, or is it rather a summary of what he or she wrote? Thus far, questions explored the writing process and the coachee’s content, which is an account of his or her experiences. The next questions will analyze the writing itself.*
3. *Did you make any decisions? Are there consecutive steps that you take to achieve a point? Are there any thoughts in particular on your mind? Is there anything you failed to address? If yes, why?*

Although the discussion generally takes approximately 20 minutes, there are coachees who need to devote an entire session to this tool because of the emergence of numerous situations.



If the writing exercise is successfully completed, then you can begin preparing, for instance, an action plan. Note that you should continue analyzing even after the account of the coachee's experiences and should not forget to draw conclusions.

A few topics to write about:

- A sentence that you heard in a bus or a restaurant.
- *A memory from your childhood. What is your first memory? Write about it.*
- *What are your dreams?*
- Write about life without mentioning the word 'life'. The same can be applied to any abstract topics 'work', 'career', 'me', 'success' 'lie', 'obstacle', 'hero' etc.
- Write anything about yourself. Then revise what you formulated as questions and made as statements.
- Write about yourself, then analyze the usage of words: *Which nouns, verbs and adjectives did you use and how often?*
- Write about your favorite activities when you were a child.
- *What is your greatest fear?*



- Write about your family in a childlike style.
- Begin sentences with: *“I remember...”*; *“I don’t remember...”*; *“What I want is...”*; *“What I don’t want is...”*; *“I know that...”*, etc.
- Start your composition with the following sentence: *“At this moment I don’t know what I should write about, maybe about...”*; *“What I really want to say is...”*; *“If I die, I’ll miss...”*; *“What I know is that...”*
- Provide an explanation – it can be about something ordinary or simple, e.g. how could be your ideal morning. Then write how it really was.
- *What kind of an animal or plant would you like to be?*

