

# RELATIONAL COACHING

*because a cord of three strands is not easily broken*



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

An interactive exploration  
with Richard Morrison

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A bit about me ...

I live & work in Newcastle.

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

I would love to see ...

the world more like the church,  
and the church more like the world.

*(in all the best ways, of course!)*

I call my private practice “Coaching”.

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What we call ourselves matters!

to ourselves -

it helps with our sense of self,  
our identity,

it may also shape what we do.

to our clients (and potential clients) -

it helps shape expectations,

it may lower barriers,

it may improve sense of self.

*What did Jesus call his clients?*

*How might this have changed things for those involved?*

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What we call ourselves doesn't matter!

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

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

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All words have around them a range of meaning.

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

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

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

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

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

But also

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

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

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## Questions to ponder ...

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

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

*How might this apply to us in our practice?*

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

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

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

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

Richard Morrison

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