

Coach's Companion

Using the Aide-Mémoire and the Leadership Journal with clients

What the sheet is for

The Aide-Mémoire is a recognition tool, not a plan. Its purpose is to let a leader identify their own pattern quickly enough, in the moment, to choose. Every entry should be written in the first person, in the present tense, and be specific enough that a colleague could confirm or deny it. If an entry reads as admirable, it is not finished.

Introducing it

Do not present the whole sheet in the first session. Introduce Section One after the client has read Part I and completed the fear and need pairs in the journal. Show the completed example (Appendix B) once, then take it away; clients who keep it copy it. Section Two is best introduced after the crossing chapters, when the client has met the cost of letting go and is less likely to write a Vessel that is a job description.

Which sections to do in session

Do the Strategy for Success and the Reaction in session, because clients soften both when alone. Do the four Daily Reminders in session, because the questions need to be in the client's language, not yours, and it takes two or three attempts to find it. Leave the Vessel and Compass for homework and review them in session. Write the Statement together, aloud, in one sitting.

Reviewing it

Review the sheet at the start of every session for the first month, then monthly. Ask three questions: which entry has returned this fortnight; which entry no longer feels true; and what did the client do at the moment they noticed. Date every revision. A sheet that has not changed in three months is either finished or unused, and it is usually unused.

Common failure modes

The Vessel written as a role. The Compass written as a value word (integrity, excellence) rather than a commitment. Driving Force naming only the fuel the client wants to be running on. Specific Practices that describe qualities rather than behaviours. A Commitment with no date. Each of these is a sign that the client is still describing who they intend to be rather than who they are; take it as information, not as a mistake to correct.

Using the journal in a programme

The Leadership Journal maps one to one onto the book's chapters and feeds the Aide-Mémoire. In a cohort, set one chapter a week, ask for the journal pages to be complete before each session, and use the Group Guide questions in session. The Model at a Glance is useful pinned up in the room; the Daily Reminders card is useful the day after.

Session notes

