

## **The Womb of Becoming: Rethinking Coaching through Fluidity, Presence, and the Space Between**

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### **Abstract**

This article reimagines coaching as a fluid, presence-based practice and proposes an original conceptual framework, the “Womb of Becoming,” a metaphor for the liminal space between awareness and transformation. Drawing on philosophical traditions, narrative inquiry, and lived coaching experience, it challenges entrenched assumptions of neutrality, constant goal orientation, and discomfort avoidance. Informed by Victor Turner’s liminality and Jungian psychology, it invites coaches to embrace ambiguity as a vital phase of growth. Through four phases – Awakening, Suspension, Reconstitution, and Integration – it positions coaching as a sacred process of becoming beyond performance-driven change.

*Keywords: liminality, becoming, identity, presence- based coaching, narrative transformation*

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### **Introduction: Coaching at a Crossroads – Reimagining the Unquestioned**

Much of coaching moves from awareness straight to action much like “aha to action.” But in doing so, it bypasses the most formative phase of transformation into the liminal space in which old identities dissolve and new ones have yet to form (Turner, 1969; Bridges, 2004; Mezirow, 1991; Kegan, 1995). This liminal space, often mistaken for stagnation, is where the deepest transformations take root.

Over the past two decades, coaching has expanded from its early focus on executive performance and goal attainment into more complex territories of identity, wellbeing, and trauma-aware practice. Yet, foundational beliefs like neutrality, goal-centricity, and detachment risk oversimplifying human development (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). As Scharmer (2009) invites us to consider through the lens of emergent systems thinking, the rise of psychology, neuroscience, and AI prompts us to ask: “Do our cherished beliefs still serve client growth?”

In practice, clients often encounter a fragile, ambiguous period between awareness and action, a liminal phase in which old identities have dissolved but new ones are not yet fully formed. This “in-between” space, while rich with the potential for profound change, is frequently misinterpreted as stagnation. Without frameworks to hold this phase with presence, care, and ethical attunement, coaches may inadvertently push clients toward premature action, stall their growth, or leave them feeling unsupported.

Although related domains from anthropology's concept of *liminality* (Turner, 1969) to trauma-informed and narrative coaching (Drake, 2018) offer valuable insights, there remains no dedicated, phase-based coaching model designed to guide practitioners through this suspension zone with both structure and sensitivity, particularly in the context of post-pandemic shifts in human development. Perhaps coaching has historically privileged measurable progress over developmental ambiguity.

This article proposes the Womb of Becoming Model, a fluid, presence-centred, four-phase framework for recognising, honouring, and ethically supporting clients through the overlooked middle space of transformation. Drawing on Jungian psychology (Jung, 1933), existential theory (Frankl, 2006), and lived coaching experience, the model reclaims this territory as a vital developmental stage, offering both conceptual depth and practical tools. It invites coaches to move beyond the pursuit of linear progress toward a deeper ethos: holding space for *becoming* as well as *doing*.

### Sacred Cows of Coaching: Beliefs Ready for Re-examination

Coaching's philosophical roots and ethical codes have served to differentiate it from therapy and advisory work. These principles built credibility but have also calcified into norms that may hinder responsiveness to clients in existential transition. Table 1 presents five such assumptions, often treated as universal truths. The challenges to these assumptions and suggested reframing are included.

#### Section-A: Sacred Cows

Assumption	Challenge	Reframe
Neutrality	Emotional resonance needed in raw moments, not cold detachment	From distance to presence
Client has all answers	Systemic, emotional complexity can make answers elusive	Co-creative inquiry; mentoring when needed
Future-focus only	Ignoring the past overlooks trauma and self-patterns	Past as context; allow reintegration
Avoid discomfort	Growth is often uncomfortable	Discomfort as ally; create psychological safety
AI/tech exclusion	Digital support needed for post-session integration	AI as scaffolding, not replacement

**Table 1: Sacred Cows of Coaching – A Reappraisal. Source: Author's conceptual framework (Madan, 2025)**

#### Implications for Practice

Rigid adherence to these assumptions risks reducing coaching to an efficiency tool rather than a transformative process. When clients encounter liminal spaces the psychological threshold

between identities, goal orientation or over-detachment can amplify isolation. This leads us to the core proposition of this article: the Womb of Becoming that includes thoughtful recommendations for coach development, ethics, or pedagogy. Coaching programs might reconsider how neutrality is framed not as emotional withdrawal, but as non-judgmental presence.

**Section-B: The Forgotten Phase**

Transformation is not linear. After awareness but before action lies a fragile “womb of becoming” often mistaken for stagnation but where the deepest change takes root. It is in this space, what we may call the liminal space, that clients are most tender (Turner, 1969), most open, and paradoxically, most at risk. Like fetal development, it demands care, presence, and nourishment. To evolve as a profession, coaching must move beyond goal-chasing to models that honour the messy, formative middle. Here, clients need grounding, acknowledgment, and a companion who walks beside them until change is ready to emerge. Building upon the initial critique of coaching’s sacred assumptions, Table 2 expands these into a framework of emerging alternatives that reposition coaching as an ethically resonant, presence-based practice.

Sacred Cow	Underlying Belief	Challenge	Proposed Reframe
<b>1. The Client Always Has the Answer Within</b>	Coaching is a self-directed process	In trauma or identity disruption, answers may not exist yet. Forcing them can induce guilt	Coaches facilitate co-discovery and provide scaffolding when clients are in liminal spaces
<b>2. Coaching Is Goal-Centric and Future-Focused</b>	Success is defined by measurable progress	Not all transformation is linear; some phases require stillness, reflection and returns to previous states	Redefine progress to include emotional integration and identity reconstruction
<b>3. The Coach Is Neutral and Detached</b>	Professionalism equals distance	Over-detachment can feel like abandonment during emotional intensity	Replace neutrality with <i>resonant presence</i> – ethical, attuned engagement without over-identification
<b>4. Coaching Must Avoid Discomfort</b>	Sessions should feel empowering and positive.	Growth often emerges from ambiguity and discomfort. Avoidance perpetuates superficial change. Learning itself is a place of discomfort, unfamiliarity	Normalize discomfort as a developmental ally; create psychological safety for holding uncertainty and build risk tolerance

Sacred Cow	Underlying Belief	Challenge	Proposed Reframe
<b>5. Coaching Is a Bounded Relationship Focused Only on Performance or Goals</b>	Context and identity work belong elsewhere	Clients bring whole selves, including grief, spiritual crises, and relational dynamics	Honor the human narrative; integrate narrative and existential approaches within ethical boundaries

**Table 2: Sacred Cows and Emerging Alternatives, source: Author’s conceptual framework (Madan, 2025)**

### **Introducing the Womb of Becoming: A Fluid Coaching Model for Post-Awareness Integration**

This article proposes the Womb of Becoming Model, a fluid, phase-based coaching framework designed to address the often-overlooked emotional space between awareness and transformation. The Womb of Becoming reclaims this middle space – what we’ve called the liminal zone – as a vital phase of the transformation arc.

The model draws its name from the biological metaphor of a fetus in the womb: no longer who it was, not yet who it will become.

#### ***Key principles:***

- Presence over Process: Hold emotional and existential space, not just goals.
- Fluidity: Pace follows client need, not rigid timelines.
- Holding: Containment of ambiguity is a catalyst for becoming.
- Integration: Focus on lived change, not just insight.

#### ***The Womb of Becoming Model: Four Phases***

Phase	Experience	Needs	Coach Role	Risks if Ignored
Awakening	Shock, grief, questioning	Safety, acknowledgment	Witness, hold space	Emotional overload, resistance
Suspension	Stillness, uncertainty	Nutriments, resonant presence	Deep attunement	Stuckness, dependency
Reconstitution	Emerging clarity, new identity	Reflection, encouragement	Gentle guidance	Instability, premature action

Integration	Alignment, ownership	Mentoring, support from distance	Careful disengagement	Disconnection, relapse
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**Table 3: The Four Phases of the Womb of Becoming Model, source: author’s compilation (Madan, 2025)**

The coach adapts stance and energy as clients move through each phase, practicing fluid “presence” rather than forcing progress.

This model reframes the coach not as a consistent agent of goal-directed change, but as a fluid companion who adapts presence, energy, and engagement to the client’s evolving emotional and psychological landscape. It is a living process, not a linear method.

***Expanded Phase Descriptions***

*Awakening, the rupture.* (Cracks in the Known). This is the destabilizing moment when the old story fractures like a seed breaking its shell. Clients often experience shock, grief, or questioning as their known reality begins to collapse.

*Suspension, the fertile void.* (Hanged Man). This phase echoes the archetype of the Hanged Man in Tarot, a figure suspended upside down, not in punishment, but in surrender. It represents the in-between, a liminal pause where old structures dissolve but the new self has not yet formed. Much like the caterpillar in its chrysalis, where all old DNA is broken down before the butterfly emerges, this stage is about surrendering to stillness and ambiguity before reconstitution can begin.

*Reconstitution, the new weaving.* (Threads of the new). Out of the void, tentative strands of clarity emerge. Clients test new ways of speaking, acting, and being like weaving the first threads of a new fabric. This is fragile and requires reflection and gentle challenge.

*Integration, the lived alignment.* (Walking with Wholeness). The new identity takes root in daily life. This is not a static arrival but a rhythm of coherence, where choices and actions align with the inner transformation. Walking with wholeness means embodying what has been re-formed.

**Section-C: Case Vignettes**

***The Model in Motion***

The following five vignettes illustrate the lived complexity of the Womb of Becoming Model. Each narrative mirrors distinct phases of the framework while underscoring the necessity of fluid, presence-based coaching. The vignettes are drawn from the author’s coaching practice over several years. Each has been anonymized and, where needed, lightly reframed to protect confidentiality. These narratives are not intended as formal case studies but as interpretive vignettes aligned with narrative inquiry traditions. They illustrate complexity, ethical discernment, and the coach’s evolving stance in real contexts. All examples comply with ICF ethical standards.

***Case 1: The Voice That Needed Hearing***

In our first session, the client arrived with tightly wound emotion and a lifetime of unspoken stories. Each attempt at inquiry was met with long, urgent monologues – not defiance, but a fierce self-protection. I chose to stop steering and simply witness. Inside, I felt the quiet tug-of-war between the urge to gently guide her toward focus and the deeper knowing that this was not the moment for direction. The session became an exercise in restraint, trusting that presence was more healing than progress. At the end, she whispered, “Thank you for listening. I just needed to hear myself speak.” This moment echoed Kline’s (1999) principle that thinking unfolds when one is deeply heard. Over time, threads connected, patterns surfaced, grief was named and yet, action faltered. Cultural expectations, family obligations, and the pull of old patterns kept her in place. She had stepped into awareness, but the doorway to transformation felt unreachable. But then, almost imperceptibly, a micro-shift occurred; she began ending her stories with questions rather than full stops. Questions like, “It has happened, but why did I let it happen? What made me do this? Why did I do it to myself?” These were not yet answers, but the stirrings of self-inquiry, signs that her silence had begun to crack open into curiosity, a first fragile step toward becoming. That change signalled the first crack in the stillness, the beginning of readiness for what might come next. This was the Suspension phase of the Womb of Becoming, an in-between where presence mattered more than progress. It raises an ethical question for coaching: is transformation only action, or can sitting deeply in truth be its own form of arrival? This is the powerful emptiness of silence, the space where words fall away, yet transformation begins to take root.

***Case 2: The Fear of Letting Go***

This client was insightful, articulate, and clear on what needed to change. Yet beneath his readiness lay a quiet grief: “If I become this new version of myself, I’ll have to let go of the person who built my career, my relationships, my reputation.” His challenge wasn’t resistance but mourning an identity that had once served him. Transformation was delayed not by lack of clarity, but by the layered process of letting go of something coaching often encounters, yet rarely names. In that moment, I realized, insight was not his problem, identity loss was, a pattern echoed in Drake’s (2018) work on narrative coaching. He was grieving the version of himself that had succeeded, even if that version no longer served him. The fear of the unknown future was less daunting than the pain of shedding the known past. For him, awareness and action were happening in parallel, but transformation was delayed not because of resistance, but because of mourning.

***Case 3: The Deluge Before the Doorway***

Before our first session began, her messages poured in – over 40 of them, unfolding years of trauma, a strained marriage, and postpartum vulnerability. She wasn’t just telling her story; she was reclaiming her voice after years of silence. “I want to be strong,” she wrote, “I want to go beyond this weakness.”

Recognizing that her needs lay beyond coaching’s scope, I listened fully, acknowledged her courage, and referred her to clinical support. As a coach, I was acutely aware that this was beyond the ethical bounds of coaching. Postpartum depression, trauma, and mental health

concerns required a trained clinical lens. This moment affirmed that coaching is often the first doorway people find to be heard, and that ethical referral, grounded in presence and care, can itself be part of their becoming. After the referral, I maintained a light but consistent connection with a short follow-up email to let her know she had been heard, a check-in weeks later to acknowledge her progress, ensuring that the handoff did not feel like abandonment but a continuation of care through a different channel.

#### ***Case 4: The Friend, The Mother, The Voice Within***

A long-time friend became a coaching client, seeking clarity amid caregiving for a seriously ill child, managing her home, and holding her family together. Beneath her resilience was a quiet loss of self. Action steps repeatedly dissolved, not from lack of will, but from the deeper question: Could she still be a good mother if she put herself first?

Seated in the Suspension phase, she was aware of her need to reclaim identity yet bound by duty and conditioning. In her case, the bind was not just personal but cultural – the deeply ingrained belief that a “good mother” is self-sacrificing, tireless, and ever available. Centuries of social narratives had woven this expectation into her sense of worth. My role was not to push for progress, but to remind her: wanting space to breathe is not selfish, it’s essential. Over time, even voicing that possibility aloud became an act of resistance against the script she had been handed.

#### ***Case 5: The Silent Wife, The Sacrifice Unspoken***

In a joint session with her husband, an elderly woman broke a lifetime of silence speaking of dreams deferred and emotions long buried. What appeared as peace was, in her words, “a beautifully arranged resignation.” The roles were fulfilled, but the self felt incomplete.

Poised between Reconstitution and Integration, she wasn’t seeking change, but reconciliation – grieving the un-lived possibilities while holding on to the identity shaped by years of sacrifice. Letting go would mean admitting what she never got to become. It would mean facing the grief of un-lived possibilities. The transformation she sought wasn’t change, it was reconciliation.

These five cases illustrate how the womb of becoming emerges across diverse coaching contexts through silence, loss, boundary-setting, cultural expectation, and professional transition. In each instance, the client found themselves in a transitory space neither anchored in the past identity nor fully formed in the new one. These stories remind us that what may appear as ‘stuckness’ is often the fertile ground of transformation. By holding this neglected womb-space with patience, ethical clarity, and presence, coaches can honor the painful yet necessary gestation of new becoming. Far from being an exception, the womb of becoming is a recurring phase of human growth, one that demands recognition, language, and care, especially in the space a coach intentionally holds for the client. These stories underscore a truth rarely spoken in coaching spaces: Transformation is a spiral of awakenings, hesitations, grieving, resisting, and becoming. And the coach must be a fluid companion through all of it.

## **Letting Go: A Metamorphosis**

Letting go is rarely tidy, it's a metamorphic process (Bridges, 2004). Physiological, emotional, and existential, it rarely happens instantly. More often, it arrives disguised as resistance, confusion, or fatigue. If awareness is a lightning bolt, letting go is the storm that follows and the stillness that remains.

To understand the process of letting go, we can look to nature. Before the shedding of their skin in preparation for their new skin, the snake becomes inactive, hidden. Its skin dulls. Its eyes cloud over. Internally, hormones are released that loosen the old layer of skin. It rubs against rough surfaces to tear open what once protected it. Only then can the snake slough off the old layer and emerge in a new skin.

This is not unlike the human experience of letting go. The inactivity mirrors our psychological retreat when we go silent, uncertain, still. The dullness and clouded vision reflect how confusing it is to see ourselves clearly in this space. And the rubbing against rough surfaces is deeply metaphorical: it is the discomfort of revisiting old beliefs, relationships, childhood narratives, or deeply ingrained conditioning. The shedding doesn't happen in a session, it happens over time, as the client slowly loosens their grip on the old self. This is not erasure, it's reconstitution. What remains is choice, not compulsion. Yet, just as the snake leaves behind an inverted image of itself, we too look back at the selves we shed, asking: Will I still belong? The paradox is clear – we crave growth yet want to be recognized while changing. Coaching often rushes this phase, moving from planning to action without honoring post-shedding recovery. Letting go is not merely dropping something; it can be seen as part of re-regulating who we are socially, spiritually and emotionally (in line with Siegel's (2010) work on identity and coherence). It requires presence, reflection, and space for the transformation to take root. In coaching, we often label this discomfort with terms like ego death or limbo. Some clients feel like they are suspended in a moment of stillness with no momentum. It is not apathy it is the hanged man energy from the tarot: a sacred pause before rebirth.

“Will I still be accepted? Will I still belong?”

We long to grow, but we want to be recognized while changing. We want to be new, without losing the relationships that loved our old selves. The act of letting go, then, is not about dropping something. It requires support, reflection and space and most definitely mourning. Levinson's work on life transitions (1978) reminds us that every change carries a trace of loss. And wherever there is loss, some form of mourning is required if becoming is to take root. The same applies in coaching, until the grief of what is left behind is acknowledged, reconstitution risks becoming premature, leaving clients suspended between the old and the new.

## **Pre Conclusion**

Coaching has long celebrated clarity, structure, and action-orientation. These bring a sense of movement, a measurable arc, and a sense of control. But clarity is not always the beginning of change, and action is not always the culmination of growth. Often, what emerges in coaching is a quieter truth at a moment when the client is not moving forward, but inward. Not acting, but dissolving. Not achieving but becoming.

And it is here that we ask: What is enough? Who decides? Are we, as coaches, fluid enough to hold that space?

“Enough” will always be the client’s to define. For some, enough may be the single word voiced after minutes of stillness. For others, it may be the slow surfacing of a long-buried truth. Our task is not to rush but to stay, anchoring the space until their own sense of enough arises.

The vignettes remind us that silence is not emptiness, it is the womb of becoming itself. For some clients, the silence carried grief; for others, the first questions of self-inquiry. In each case, silence became the hidden catalyst for transformation.

The deeper question is: how capable and comfortable are we in silence? Silence is not empty; it is alive. It unsettles, it nurtures, it provokes. What that silence does to us as coaches – whether it triggers impatience, discomfort, or deep presence – determines if we can hold it for someone else.

At times, silence breaks unpredictably. Coach and client may speak simultaneously one posing a question, the other unveiling a revelation. These moments remind us that silence is not absence but co-presence, a field of mutual attunement. The task is to balance reflection with response, to respect the pause without filling it prematurely, so the client can feel safe in this newfound quiet.

The womb of becoming is, in many ways, a womb of silence. And the coach’s greatest gift may be to normalize that silence, to sit within it without fear, and to let the client discover that in the pause, they are not alone. Enough is not about answers; it is about presence. Enough is not about progress; it is about readiness. Enough is not about the coach’s timeline; it is about the client’s unfolding.

Much of coaching today is shaped around action steps, measured against visible progress, evaluated for alignment with goals. But what if the coaching relationship was not a contract for outcomes but a container for unfolding? Do we walk beside the client for their immediate needs? Or do we walk beside them until they no longer need to be validated at all?

Perhaps it is both.

Maybe we begin with small steps – tangible, reachable, familiar – and through those, build the client’s relationship with their deeper self. And from that place, perhaps they slowly learn to become fluid. Not reactionary. Not rigid. But self-aware, adaptive, and aligned. A person no longer performing for acceptance but living from truth.

In this way, coaching begins to resemble not just a profession, but a sacred practice. This echoes the Mahabharata, the great Indian epic that weaves together philosophy, duty, and human struggle, offering timeless lessons on leadership and transformation. In this narrative, Lord Krishna did not merely support Arjuna with clarity of goals, but stayed beside him in doubt, identity collapse, and war. He coached, yes, but he also mentored, held, and reminded.

This raises a quiet but essential question: Are we only coaching for goals? Or are we mentoring for becoming?

Perhaps coaching and mentoring aren't opposites. Perhaps the wise coach learns to flow between them, knowing when to hold the mirror, and when to offer a hand. Knowing when to challenge, and when to simply witness. The distinction, then, is not in the method but in the intent. Does the client seek clarity for the now, or courage for the becoming?

What we need, more than ever, is not just coaches with certifications but coaches with presence, patience, and poetry. Coaches who can hold the womb. Sit through the shedding. Walk with the client through every phase of their becoming, not just the ones that are visible, measurable, or celebrated. Witness the chameleon which is often used to show how change starts inside before it becomes visible outside. It is not instant. It begins with an inner shift long before it can be seen by others.

Because transformation, in its truest form, is not a shift in outcome (Frankl, 2006).

It is a quiet return to self.

### **Implications for Coaching Practice**

- Shift from Performance to Presence: Redefine success to include coherence and meaning
- Normalize Liminality: Teach that ambiguity is integral to growth
- Reimagine Neutrality: Replace detachment with ethical resonance
- Rituals and Tools: Use journaling and embodied practices for suspension.

### **Implications for Coach Education and Credentialing**

- *Curriculum Design*: Integrate trauma sensitivity, existential inquiry, and narrative techniques
- *Supervision Practices*: Encourage exploration of coaches' own discomfort with ambiguity
- *Ethical Frameworks*: Recognize emotional containment as a legitimate dimension of professional practice.

### **Future Research Directions**

- *Longitudinal Impact*: Study sustained effects of presence-based models on identity reconstruction. Building on Silsbee's (2008) work on *Presence-Based Coaching*, future research could explore how extended engagement with presence practices shapes client identity, resilience, and self-generative capacity over time. *The Womb of Becoming* model invites deeper inquiry into whether prolonged attention to liminality, suspension, and integration leads to lasting developmental shifts, beyond short-term performance outcomes
- *Cross-Cultural Inquiry*: Explore how cultural narratives influence experiences of liminality. Inherited scripts from family, community, or tradition can frame suspension as weakness, normalize silence, or idealize sacrifice making it harder for clients to step into becoming. Research can illuminate how these collective stories amplify or constrain the womb of becoming, showing that liminality is not only personal but also deeply cultural

- *Digital Coaching*: Examine whether virtual platforms can preserve resonance during vulnerable phases. With AI and technology increasingly woven into coaching, it is crucial to test whether presence and containment so central to the *Womb of Becoming* can be experienced authentically online, and what adaptations may be required.

### **Conclusion: A Fluid Paradigm**

In an age fixated on action, coaching must reclaim stillness, the sacred ecology where identities dissolve and reform. The coach is a companion, not an engineer of change. As Viktor Frankl notes, “Between stimulus and response, there is a space... in that space lies our growth.” The highest gift of coaching is to guard that space for becoming. The Womb of Becoming is not a metaphor of passivity, it is an ecology of possibility, where identities dissolve and reform in sacred rhythm. Coaches who dare to hold this terrain without rushing it become custodians of transformation, not its engineers.

As a coach, I’ve come to realize that presence is more powerful than process. Across the sessions I’ve held, and the lives that unfolded in those sacred spaces, what clients most deeply needed wasn’t advice or even clarity. It was the space to be heard. Not because they were confused, but because they had long been silenced. Because they *knew* and yet were never given the room to speak their knowing into the world.

One of the most unexpected moments of coaching clarity came during a reciprocal session with a peer coach. We began with a challenge. Somewhere in the middle, a soft joke turned into laughter, which spiraled into uncontrollable joy, both of us doubled over, laughing from the belly, not the mind. When we returned to the session, her voice softened. She said, “I know my limitations. I know how I need to manage this. But what I just realized is I need to laugh more. I need to be with people who see me. This wasn’t what I came looking for but it’s what I needed.”

That session embodied fluidity not in content, but in energy. We weren’t pushing toward a result. We were present with what emerged. And then it happened: laughter. Unscripted, spontaneous almost mischievous in its timing. It was not design, not intention. It was synchronicity, the invisible current that arises when two people meet in the space between words. As Jung (1973) described, synchronicity is a meaningful coincidence that carries significance beyond causality.

In that moment her goal did not resolve, but it shifted from striving for outcomes to remembering her vitality. And in witnessing her, I too was mirrored: how much was I really living through my challenges? What unfolded was not a resolution of dilemmas, but a glimpse of strength. The next step emerged not through reflection or analysis, but through the lightness of shared presence.

This perhaps is the deeper truth of the womb of becoming: transformation is not always built, sometimes it is given. Sometimes it is the laugh, the pause, the synchronicity that reminds us of who we are and what we need. The work of the coach is not to manufacture it, but to stay long enough in the silence, in the suspension, for it to reveal itself. That, perhaps, is the real work: learning to be together until insight arises.

The coach does not need to be the torchbearer. Nor the water that surrounds the flame.

The coach only needs to be.

Of course, structure has its place, especially when clients arrive with dilemmas, decisions, and defined goals. But fluidity is the guiding principle. Structure must serve the moment, not confine it. And fluidity, I believe, is where the sacred lives, an echo of Thich Nhat Hanh's reflections on presence (1998).

In Taoist philosophy, this is the principle of wu wei, effortless action, non-doing (Lao Tzu, trans. Mitchell, 1988). Not inactivity, but a graceful alignment with life's natural rhythm.

Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving until the right action arises by itself? Tao Te Ching (Lao Tzu, 2006)

This wisdom echoes across civilizations. In the Mahabharata, Lord Krishna does not fight Arjuna's war. He does not command or instruct. He reminds. He witnesses Arjuna's unraveling. He stays. And only when Arjuna is ready, does he rise.

You have the right to act, but not to the fruits of action. Let not the result of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction. (Bhagavad Gita in Easwaran, 2007, Chapter 2, Verse 47)

Coaching, then, is not merely a pathway to action. It is a practice in presence. It is about walking beside someone as they slowly remember who they are beneath the roles, beyond the conditioning, in the stillness of the self.

From my own coaching experience, I have come to see that the role of the coach is not to impose structure but to remain responsive and present, supporting the form the client sets for the session.

Much like water, which adjusts to whatever container it is in. Like laughter, which comes naturally without planning. Like awareness, which simply reflects what is.

As an authorial metaphor from my own reflection, I often ask: Have you ever seen a flood apologize to the river for taking an unexpected path? This image captures how coaching too must flow with the client's process, without apology for its non-linearity.

River just flows. It changes things. It may distort what is familiar. And it may restore what was stuck. The river only witnesses.

And that is what we are here to do.

To witness. To stay present.

To support the exploration as it happens.

Because in that space, clients do not just find their goals.

They discover themselves.

If we can learn to honour the womb of becoming, we can hold space for transformation that is not rushed, not forced, but ripened into readiness. This is not a passive phase it is the place where identity is rewritten.

This statement reflects my core belief developed through practice, that coaching is not a sprint to action; it is the sacred art of becoming.

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### **Endnotes**

The metaphor of the “womb of becoming” is employed here to describe the liminal space of transformation. This conceptualization emerged through the author’s reflective coaching practice and ongoing book project *Unlearning to Become: Notes from the Uncarved Path*. A similar phrase appears in Lian Hurst Mann’s work, *The Womb of Becoming*, which is acknowledged here with respect.

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