



# THE ART OF HOLDING SPACE

How to Create a Safe and Nurturing  
Environment for Your Clients To Thrive!

## THE ART OF HOLDING SPACE

How to Create a Safe and Nurturing Environment for Your Clients To Thrive!

Life coaching can help a client to clarify goals, identify and move past mental blocks, and come up with stick strategies for following through with attaining their desires.

As a coach one of the most important skills you can develop is the art of Holding Space for your client as they work through any mental blocks and clarify their goals.

Typically, the term Holding Space is used in today's coaching industry to convey the skill of being present and listening while coaching a client.

As important as being "present" and "listening" is, there's a whole lot more to it.

Holding Space is your ability to create a multidimensional container for your client to process their thoughts and feelings, and to also birth clear insights that move them towards living their best life.

So what do we mean by a multidimensional container?

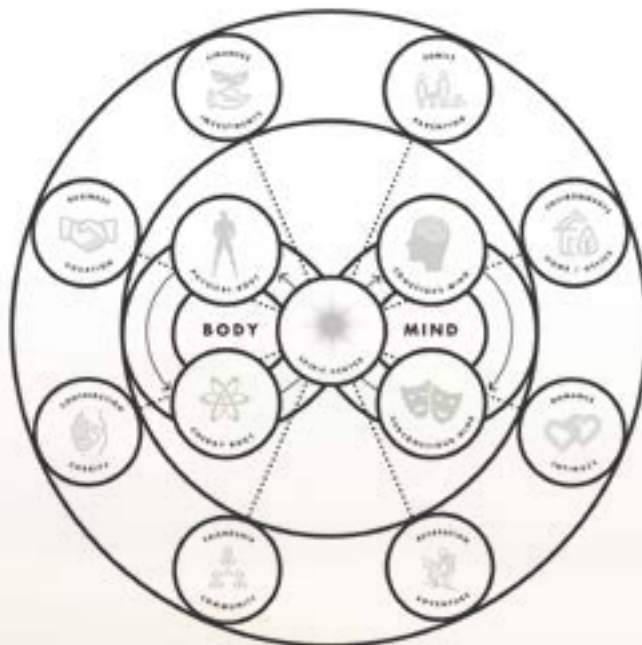
Simply put, consider the container (or space) as the environment you create for your client's transformation to take place.

This multidimensional environment has physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects to it, and as a coach, you'll want to be able to Hold Space in a multidimensional way.

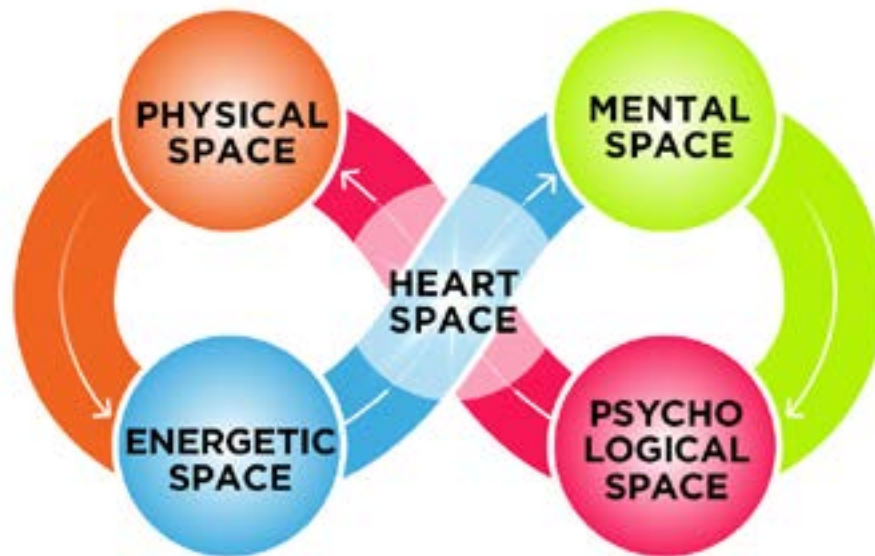
Now at first blush that might sound like a complex skill to develop, but fortunately, we can use the S.A.T.O.R.I. Mastery Map to show you how to hold "multidimensional" space for your client in 5 different areas.

What we do is use the area in the center of the Mastery Map, known as the Energy Engine. We use the 5 circles in the Engine to identify the 5 different ways that as a coach we can Hold Space.

### LIFE FORCE ENERGY SCORE



## THE 5 AREAS OF HOLDING SPACE ARE



1) Physical Space, 2) Energetic Space, 3) Mental Space, 4) Psychological Space, and 5) Heart Space

Before we dive into these 5 areas remember, we are creating this multidimensional container for holding space so our clients can identify what they are thinking and feeling.

As your client is "processing" there are a variety of things that can take place. Their processing might be in the form of gaining clarity about what they really want, or releasing pent up feelings, venting frustrations or just talking out loud about what they are going through.

**NOTE:** please be sure to read "The Difference Between a Life Coach and a Therapist" at the end of this workbook.

Whatever the scenario, your role as a Life-Force Coach is to create and hold a SAFE and nurturing environment for your client. This helps them express themselves without fear of rejection or judgment, and ultimately, get to the place of clear insight,

Ok, let's dive into the Five Areas of Holding Space.

## Holding 'Physical' Space:

**1) Physical space...** Physical Space includes your in-person meeting room, your virtual meeting room, as well as your physiology.

The physical environment that your client is experiencing during the session. Think about what they are seeing, smelling, hearing and the colors.

Physical space also has to do with your physical body feeling good, and your body language.

Physical Space includes your in-person meeting room, your virtual meeting room, as well as your physiology.

If meeting in person, create a comfortable, safe welcoming environment for transformation. If online, encourage your client to meet with you from a safe, comfortable spot each meeting and 'set your stage' to encourage this feeling as well - even choosing the right color scheme for your space can help.

For example, the color blue has been shown to make people feel safe, relaxed and more trusting. So for instance, light shades of blue in your background can help with clients that have trust or stress management issues.

Also be sure to take care of your body before each session. This includes tending to your nutrition, hydration and physiology so you can show up energized and present.

Lastly be mindful of your body language (ie. posture, facial disposition, smile).

All of these Physical attributes can make a big difference for both you and your client.



## Holding 'Energetic' Space:

**2) Energetic Space** – This is your personal energy vibrating at a Clear and Aligned space. Like attracts like and you want to have a beautiful energy that your client can move towards. This is a vibration of presence, health, joy, love and possibility. Even when your client is sharing something with you that is not a 'happy story' you will still maintain that loving energy.

Energetic Space has to do with your energetic expression and the energy that is being expressed by your client. Let's start with getting your energy right, before a session.

Your energy needs to be open and flowing to allow them to feel the free space to change, grow and transform. You may want to do some qigong flow moves, meditate, breathwork, etc. Use 'quiet' energetic space so you can hold the container for them to process, absorb and awaken.

As magical as it may sound, your uplifting energetic state will help entrain their energy to a higher level. Energetically you are helping to bring their frequency up so they can tap into being themselves fully.

As they become more familiar with their best selves, by being in your compassionate and loving energetic field, they'll be more comfortable allowing that energy to seep into their everyday life.

Additionally reading the energy of your client is also an important aspect of Holding Energetic Space. What your client is expressing verbally may often be different than what they are expressing energetically.

Everyone has a different "mask" that they're used to wearing and they may wear it so often, they think it's true now. But to allow them space energetically, you must develop the skill to see to the energetic space that's right for them.

If they are very still, but their energy is hyperactive, it's important that they know it's safe to express what they're feeling energetically.

Knowing where someone is coming from requires more than listening to their words. You need to connect with them on an energetic level – as in any personal or professional relationship, the energy of your meeting is the collective energy of both you and your client and how that energy combines during your meeting.

**TIP:** Hold Energetic Space for your own growth – in your own practices, and in your own coaching practice. Stick with your daily energy practices, and always allow yourself time before a session to prepare yourself energetically and emotionally. Also allow yourself time after the session for your own reflection – not just so you can let go of anything you may have picked up energetically, but to reflect on your session and anything that you might have done 'better' that you can tweak for next time.

## Holding 'Mental' Space:

**3) Mental Space** – The aspect of mental space has to do with being prepared and doing your homework. Have your cheat sheets, know your processes, etc. When you are mentally prepared you have quick access to the tools that you have available, your knowledge of Review your notes. Know what your client's biggest struggle is, their biggest desire, what they worked on last week, review the notes you have on the client so that during the session you are not mentally wondering what they're talking about but you feel sharp and alert.

Review your notes; know the mission. Know where you are going so you are relaxed and centered. Reel people back in if they go on a tangent (ie. control the session). Don't over coach your client. Share, pause, clarify. Also let them reflect upon what they just shared. Give breathing room; room for the AHA to pop! Develop the art of listening. **Use "Exploration" Questions. See Coaching Questions Module**

To hold a safe mental space for your client, it's important to have the right mindset yourself. **YOU Be Right and the Right Questions and Interaction Will Follow**

In general, rules-of-thumb for a helpful mindset for a Coach to maintain during a session is to come from a place of:

- Being spontaneous and RESPONDING rather than coming in with everything pre-planned.

- Knowing that you don't know: you don't know the right answers for THIS client until you help the client discover those answers – and that means asking questions that encourage an actual dialog with the client. If you're asking yes/no questions, it probably means you're not engaging them deeply enough, or you're TELLING rather than ASKING. If there's one big no-no, it's that. Don't offer advice disguised as questions. The best results are when your client is guided to the right advice from within themselves.
- Serving as a catalyst for the client to change their thinking or perspective or reframing the current challenge or situation
- Being light, encouraging and, when appropriate... humorous (often humor can create an instant shift in the client's energy and allow them to step outside of their 'problem prison' for a moment to find new perspective)
- Encourage the client to find their deeper story and deeper strength rather than focusing only on their perceived problem – respect the journey of self-discovery that they're on and honor your place in it
- And knowing that sometimes the silence after the question or after the answer is the most powerful part! Always allow space for silence when contemplation or reflecting on an insight is appropriate!

## Holding 'Psychological' Space:

**4) Psychological Space** - this has to do with not allowing your own personal stories, beliefs, struggles, and wins to influence how you hold space for your client. If they're sharing a story it is not the coach's responsibility to have an opinion of who is right, who is wrong, or to hold someone as a victim or as a bully. This is a judge free zone so you can't allow concepts and experiences in your subconscious mind to rule the session.

Holding a safe psychological space for your client and yourself boils down to always remembering your responsibilities in your role.

- Hold space for your client to process challenges and help to normalize those challenges as part of the natural coaching and transformation experience.
- Hold space for your client as a responsible adult. They are responsible for their own choice and evolution. You are there for assistance but ultimately, the responsibility and the consequences are theirs.
- Hold space without reacting when you hear something intense or alarming. Remember to not project your own story onto your client.
- Hold space for yourself as a human (you might have a possible psychological or physiological reaction to something they say), so use your own tools to process it for yourself and do not let it interfere with your session for your client.

- Stick with your daily practices, and allow yourself time before a session to prepare yourself energetically and emotionally. Also allow yourself time after the session for your own reflection – not just so you can let go of whatever you've picked up energetically, but to reflect on your session and anything that you might like to tweak for next time.
- Realize that 'holding space' does not mean there are no boundaries. There are boundaries in every healthy relationship. Understand that your client will have boundaries and you, as their coach, must have boundaries. Find the boundaries that work for you and your client and then honor those boundaries.
- Hold space for the unknown – your client might come from a different culture or racial/religious/governmental dynamic that is outside your experience. You can relate to them on a human level and still allow space for the unknown part of their experience with which you might not be familiar

## Holding 'Heart' Space:

**5) Heart Space** – There are times when all the rules and guidelines may need to fade to the back to allow your heart to speak the truth to you as guided by your own personal intuition. Your intuition will follow how you receive the information you're hearing from your client as well as how to respond to it. If you are clear vessel you may feel more accurately when it is time to speak and when it is time to be quiet. So the value of allowing your intuition to be strong and to grow as you grow as a coach is highly valuable.

For a S.A.T.O.R.I. Life-Force Coach it's always ALL about the love and helping your client get back into their heart; the ultimate place of feeling and healing. This is the brain of their being; the place where all of the inner guidance and answers come from.

The heart is often the key to set someone free. Your job as a Life-Force Coach is to help your client to tap into that inner guidance. Also listen to your inner guidance as it might be giving you insights to share with your client. And sometimes those insights will enhance your own personal evolution. Often it's BOTH! :) When that happens, it's good to be aware of these "rules of thumb". These are good things to avoid during your coaching sessions:

- Don't offer advice or solutions disguised as questions
- Don't ramble or verbalize your self-reflecting moment. It's OK to pause and think if you're unsure of what you'd like to say.
- Don't try to find that one question that cuts through all of your client's mind babble and shifts their worldview. Let your exchange happen naturally.

- Don't be afraid to steer the client back on track if they get distracted by another topic that comes up. But if that keeps happening, it might be a defense mechanism and it might be better to come at it from another direction or at another time.
- Don't lead the witness! Guiding the client to the answer that you think is right doesn't help your client. It's much more powerful for them if they come to that answer on their own from learning to listen to their own intuition.



## The Art of Empathy in Coaching

### Nurturing a Safe Space through Empathetic Responses

The following responses are excellent responses to help soften a client's reaction if they become overly emotional or frustrated with themselves during the coaching process:

- That's ok, this is a safe space to process...
- That's ok, this is a judgment free zone...
- That's ok, we can shift this conversation...
- That's ok, it'll come – no rush – no worries...
- It's ok to not know right now...
- It's ok to just sit with not knowing...
- Feel free to think out loud...
- Let's just be right here, right now...
- No rush, just take your time...
- It's great that you feel so deeply...
- You have the right to feel what you feel...
- There are no wrong feelings...
- There's no right or wrong here...
- It's ok to let it out – this is a safe place to vent...
- I hear what you are saying... that sounds like a tough situation...
- This is a private space, everything you share is just between us...

## Tips on Being more Empathic

It's important to provide your client with the necessary space to express themselves and ponder their thoughts. If they require time to consider or reflect on a matter, patiently afford them that moment without rushing or interrupting.

This might mean you need to consciously maintain a non-reactive stance, holding space for their emotions and expressions without adopting or mirroring them. Always aim to stay anchored in a place of empathy and understanding, allowing you to respond with compassion rather than react impulsively. Should you notice yourself starting to react, pause for a mindful breath to realign yourself with your empathetic heart center.

Remember, as a Life-Force Coach, empathy isn't just a tool; it's an essential aspect of your practice. It enables you to sense when your client is processing emotions or thoughts that require additional time or space. This understanding shouldn't lead to stress on your part but should empower you.

It's your ability to discern what your client is experiencing that allows you to offer the most appropriate and effective response in each moment of their journey. This empathetic approach not only facilitates a deeper connection with your client, but also enhances the efficacy of your coaching by addressing their needs in the most impactful way.

## What about those TEARS!?

It's ok if there are tears, frustration or even anger during an emotional release. Much like myofascial bodywork, when you free the fascia and open energy channels (that have been blocked or sluggish), it is not uncommon for the client's emotional state to shift. As the energy is "freed up" there is new information that brings new types of emotion. Simply stay present with your client, allow them to process that emotional release and then guide their energy back into a positive perspective.



## The Difference Between a Life Coach and a Therapist

Although there may be some overlap in the benefits of working with a life coach and working with a licensed therapist, these professionals have distinct roles and serve unique purposes.

Unlike life coaches, therapists and other mental health professionals focus on treating mental health conditions and helping people work through trauma and other issues from their past.

Life coaches on the other hand help people focus on their future, clarifying their desires and life vision. Life coaches help their clients to set attainable goals and offer support and accountability.

**The overlap:** while working with a life coach may help you to deal with certain unresolved issues and clear mental blocks, life coaches cannot treat mood disorders, anxiety disorders, addiction, or any other mental health condition.

---

**IMPORTANT:** Know your lane and don't cross the lines. This is important for a life coach to understand. The easy "rule of thumb" here is — focus more on your clients future, rather than their past. If the client needs support addressing old wounds or traumas that surface during your sessions, be sure to let them know that this support is beyond the scope of life coaching. We recommend having resources that you can refer people to, should the need arise.

---

