



The art of constructive and motivating feedback is an essential skill for the Ikigai Coach. Feedback is a powerful tool to help the client become aware of their strengths, areas of improvement and achievements. Used well, it bolsters self-confidence, motivation, and the client's commitment to their journey towards their ikigai. Conversely, awkward or hurtful feedback can undermine the coaching alliance and halt the change process. The challenge for the coach is therefore to master the art of delivering feedback that is both supportive, accurate, and stimulating.

Constructive feedback is based on concrete and specific observations, rather than general judgments. Instead of saying "You are very brave", the Ikigai Coach might reflect: "I observe that you dared to approach a difficult topic today, despite your initial apprehension." By precisely describing behaviors and their impacts, the coach helps the client identify their resources and levers of action. Thus, feedback gains credibility and usefulness.

The formulation of feedback is a subtle art that requires practice. The Ikigai Coach ensures to use neutral and respectful vocabulary, avoiding labels and hasty generalisations. They favour a "I" perspective to assume the subjectivity of their point of view, rather than making peremptory statements. They take care to distinguish facts, feelings, and opinions, to allow the client to form his own interpretation. For example: "When I hear you talk about this project, I sense a lot of enthusiasm in your voice. From my point of view, this is a sign that you are on a path aligned with your aspirations. What do you think?"

Timing is a crucial dimension of the art of feedback. The Ikigai Coach chooses the right time to share their observations, ensuring the client is ready to hear them. They avoid delivering feedback when the client is overwhelmed by emotion or experiencing failure, so as not to put them on the defensive. On the other hand, they seize opportunities to highlight

successes and progress, to encourage the client and reinforce their learning. Thus, feedback is delivered in the flow, in a natural and smooth manner.

Motivating feedback emphasises the client's strengths and resources, rather than their shortcomings or weaknesses. The Ikigai Coach recognises and values the client's qualities, skills, and achievements, however modest. By helping them become aware of their assets, they reinforce their sense of personal effectiveness and motivation to progress. For example: "I am impressed by the clarity with which you expressed your values during our last session. This is a valuable strength for guiding your choices and taking action!". This type of feedback nourishes self-confidence and the desire to excel.

The balance between positive feedback and improvement feedback is another aspect of the art of feedback. If the Ikigai Coach only offers compliments, the client might stagnate in their comfort zone. Conversely, overly critical feedback can be disheartening. The challenge is to find a middle ground, alternating between acknowledging strengths and suggesting areas for improvement. A popular approach is the "sandwich technique": the coach starts with positive feedback, adds an area for improvement, then concludes on an uplifting note. For example: "Your presentation was very clear and structured, well done! If I may make a suggestion, it would be interesting to add some concrete examples to illustrate your points. Your ability to simplify complex concepts is a great asset to your project!"

Constructive feedback is part of a dynamic of exchange and co-construction with the client. Rather than delivering a definitive "truth", the Ikigai Coach offers their feedback as an invitation to explore and dialogue. The coach encourages the client to bounce back, to refine and add to his observations, to deepen their self-understanding. Feedback thus becomes a support for reflection and awareness, serving the client's autonomy and responsibility. The coach could suggest: "This is how I perceive your situation. Does it resonate for you? What would you like to add or clarify?"

Anecdote: During a coaching session, Sophie, a 45-year-old client, shared her difficulty in asserting herself in team work, for fear of conflict. The Ikigai Coach valued her listening skills and empathy, while inviting her to explore the impact of her restraint on the achievement of her ikigai: "I am touched by your sincere concern to maintain harmony within the team. It's a precious quality that makes you a liked colleague. At the same time, I wonder to what extent withholding your point of view might sometimes slow you down in fulfilling your deep aspirations. What do you think?". This compassionate and nuanced feedback helped Sophie become aware of her tendency to fade into the background and find ways to assert herself gently, in the service of her ikigai.

To develop their art of feedback, the Ikigai Coach can practice identifying the client's strengths and progress, even in difficult situations. They can also refine their observational and expressive abilities, by practicing describing concrete facts rather than general judgments. The practice of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) can be a precious resource for

formulating respectful and constructive feedbacks. Finally, the coach benefits from cultivating their openness to feedback, by regularly seeking feedback from their clients and peers to enhance their posture.

By cultivating the art of constructive and motivating feedback, the Ikigai Coach equips themselves with a powerful lever for the development and motivation of their clients. It creates the conditions for a coaching relationship that is both supportive and stimulating, conducive to self-fulfilment and self-realisation. This interpersonal skill, at the intersection of empathy, assertiveness, and pedagogy, strongly indicates the professionalism of the Ikigai Coach. It enables him to guide his clients with subtlety and discernment on the path to their ikigai, celebrating each step and opening new possibilities.

Key Takeaways:

- Constructive feedback is a powerful tool to enhance the client's self-confidence, motivation and engagement in their journey towards their ikigai.
- Good feedback is based on concrete and specific observations, rather than general judgments.
- Feedback formulation requires the use of neutral and respectful vocabulary, favouring the "I" perspective, and distinguishing facts, feelings and opinions.
- Timing is key: choosing the right moment, regularly highlighting successes and progress.
- Motivating feedback focuses on the client's strengths and resources to enhance their sense of personal effectiveness.
- Finding a balance between positive feedback and improvement feedback, for example using the "sandwich" technique.
- Constructive feedback is an invitation to engage and co-create with the client, in service of their autonomy and responsibility.
- To develop their feedback skills, coaches can practice identifying strengths, honing observation and expression skills (e.g., Nonviolent Communication), and cultivating their own openness to feedback.
- The art of constructive and motivating feedback is a marker of the professionalism of an Ikigai Coach, intersecting empathy, assertiveness and pedagogy.