



» Trust & Confidentiality

One of the key ICF competencies is the skill and ability to Cultivate Trust and Safety. A coach partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Additionally, the coach and coachee must maintain a relationship of mutual respect and trust which also paves the way for growth and positive change.

Violating confidentiality by sharing someone else's story, without their permission, *without consent* - to put it simply - is **violating a boundary**. Sharing someone else's story without their permission - removes a person's ability to consent.

When working with new coaching clients, we discuss confidentiality on day one. First, the client needs to know that I will hold their stories and information with conviction. Feedback to others will not be provided unless requested to do so by the coachee and discussed together. This includes updates to the coaching sponsor (boss) and at times a Human Resource Partner.

As a sponsor to the coaching relationship, most bosses want some level of communication. I work with the coachee to identify ways to meet that need. Setting up mechanisms to keep all parties in the coaching relationship up to date, appropriately is so important.

I have company sponsors wonder about this – how will they know if the investment in coaching is working, what is the person working on, what is their progress? All of these great questions can be addressed by the coachee in their 1-on-1's with their boss or in a scheduled meeting with all three of us present.

My aim is to support the coachee in their communication responsibility – informing the boss of goals, wins, barriers, progress, support for new skills, whether that's directly mentoring, providing access to training, or directly providing feedback.

My hope is that the coachee feels confident that they can have the deep conversations with their sponsor to enable that aim to happen. Now some of my coachees don't have that type of relationship with their boss, so when faced with this type of existing relationship, the coachee and I work together to create an actionable plan to build their communications.

One of my favorite tools is the **Stop / Start / Continue** document. It's a spot to collect behaviors that you're working on, whether that's new behaviors to start, behaviors that are not serving you well, and those that you do well that you should continue. It serves as a reflection prompter, reminder of new behaviors, and something that you can provide to your feedback partners. Making feedback easier will up your chances of receiving timely, concise and impactful feedback.

The entire foundation for a successful coaching relationship is based upon mutual trust and respect which only develops when confidentiality is guarded with conviction.

