

ACTIVE PRESENCE • ATTUNEMENT & SILENCE • OBSERVANT LISTENING • HUMAN CONNECTION

choice

the magazine of professional coaching

The **Gift of Presence**

Where coach and client meet in the now

VOLUME 24 • NUMBER 3
choice-online.com

The Neuroscience of Transformation

What my brain taught me about coaching

By Kemal Basaranoglu, PhD(c), MCC

REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF CHOICE MAGAZINE, CHOICEONLINE.COM



Fifteen years at the Renault Group taught me how to lead teams, hit targets and manage change on paper. But it was only when I became an ICF Master Certified Coach (MCC) that I truly understood what real transformation looks like, because I had to go through it myself.

I've sat across from executives who suddenly saw their lifelong leadership patterns for the first time. I've watched entrepreneurs rewrite the harsh inner narratives that had been running their lives for decades. And every single time, the same question echoed in my mind: What is actually happening inside that 1.4-kilogram organ we call the brain?

For a long time I treated coaching as a simple "mindset shift." Then neuroscience

caught up with me. The brain is not a static machine. It is constantly reshaping itself — a property we call neuroplasticity.

Every time we help a client challenge a deeply rooted belief, question an old assumption or rehearse a new behavior, we are not just having a conversation. We are literally intervening at the neurobiological level.

I learned this the hard way. Early in my coaching career I still believed the popular myth that "it takes 21 days to form a habit." I would watch clients light up in a session, only to see them slip back into old patterns three weeks later. It was frustrating — until I discovered the research.

Real structural change in the brain usually requires something closer to 66 days of consistent practice (according

to Lally et al., the range is typically 18 to 254 days). That shift from temporary inspiration to permanent neural architecture completely changed how I design coaching engagements.

Today I introduce myself as a professional coach specializing in neuroplasticity. I created my own model precisely to bridge my engineering background with the latest brain science. When I sit with a client, I'm no longer just asking powerful questions — I'm consciously guiding attention, evoking emotional salience and building repetition in ways that support actual synaptic change.

Real structural change in the brain usually requires something closer to 66 days of consistent practice.

For me, coaching is no longer merely a psychosocial practice. It is a guided neuroplastic process. We don't just help people think differently; we help them physically restructure the architecture of their brains so the new way of thinking becomes their default operating system.

That is why I get up every morning excited to coach — because I know that every deep conversation, every moment of insight, every small behavioral experiment is actually reshaping a human brain. In those moments I get to feel, and help my clients feel, that magnificent orchestra coming alive as every single neuron reaches out and joins hands with the next.

If my journey from corporate manager to neuro-informed coach has taught me anything, it's this: Real transformation isn't magic. It's biology supported. And it's available to any of us who are willing to do the work.

The future of our profession doesn't lie in better questions or deeper listening alone. It lies in understanding how the brain actually learns and changes — and then designing every coaching engagement to work with that biology, not against it. ●