



## The W5s of GRAPHIC COACHING: Working Visually with Individuals, Couples, Biz Partners and Small Groups.

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"The SHIFT-IT Graphic Coach"

Graphic coaching is a new, visual way to do coaching and personal development work. This article gives you the lowdown on this emerging methodology: who, what, where, when and why of it, as well as a little bit of the how thrown in for good measure.

**The WHO:** Graphic coaching is lead by a 'Graphic Coach' – facilitation professional who uses coaching AND interactive graphic techniques to assist individuals, couples, business partners and small groups in their deep thinking work. People who are attracted to graphic coaching work are usually at some sort of personal or professional crossroads – they are a bit murky, confused, and unsettled about their next steps. They seek clarity about what they really want and how to get it. They go to a Graphic Coach to have their answers guided out of them.

### The WHAT:



Graphic coaching is an alliance between the coach and the client. The coach creates a 'container' in which the individual, couple, or business partners do strategic thinking on whatever is most pressing for them.

The process has a very visual component to it – meaning that the client's thoughts and feelings are literally drawn out of them, by their coach, who uses paper and markers to write down what they are saying. These displays act as large mirrors, helping people to see just what is going on inside their head and heart.

**The WHERE:** Graphic coaching occurs either in person or over the phone. Coach and client(s) gather face-to-face and create and capture thinking on large, wall-size displays, or work by phone off of small, pre-drawn templates that can be faxed and/or emailed back and forth.

**The WHEN:** The when can vary as well. The coaching work might occur in a back-to-back retreat over several days in an intensive format, or be spread out over weeks or months in separate meetings or through a series of calls. Face-to-

face meetings range from 3 hours to 2.5 days, whereas phone sessions are in 45-60 minute intervals with assigned work in-between (from 1-12 calls depending on the series).

**The WHY:** Graphic coaching is a very effective medium. People are drawn to it (full pun intended!) for a variety of reasons: it's engaging, unique and creative. It makes thinking easier and more enjoyable (you can see what you mean). It appeals to many types of thinkers: especially visual and kinesthetic people (88% of the population). It is a systems-approach: meaning you get all the different aspects of an issue or problem onto the large paper: enabling you to connect the dots and see how things are connected and inter-related. Insights, aahas and breakthroughs are prevalent. You see how you are creating your current reality and you can choose if and how you want to course correct.

Working in a visual way gives coaching clients something tangible to see, hold and distribute – there is a tangible record of what you have done and the decisions and conclusions that you have reached. Typical coaching techniques rely primarily on the auditory sense (the thinking goes off into thin air), with graphic coaching; you have visual reports from your sessions that remind you of what occurred. It's functional art to post around your home, office and on the computer. And, you can use these visual aids to communicate your coaching work to loved ones, colleagues and trusted advisors.

**The How:**

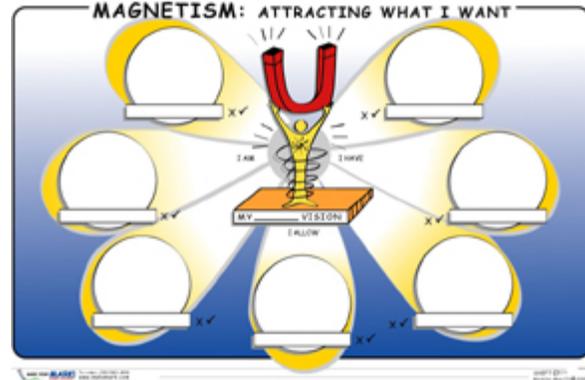
There are many ways to work graphically in a coaching setting. Here are a few of the most popular:

**Life Maps:** Draw out your life map so you can see the flow and trajectory of your life and make decisions about priorities and next steps. Excellent for seeing ongoing patterns, choice points and roads taken and not taken.

**Current Crossroads and Life Balance Wheels:** Sketch out the current crossroads that you are standing on - the issues that are presently up for grabs and the different ways that you could choose to go. Getting all of this out of your head and onto paper helps you organize, see and appreciate the tensions and opportunities that exist.

### **Personal Visions:**

Help you to define what you really want in work and/or life. Creates a picture of your desired end state. Chart acts as a North Star ... provides focus, clarity and determination. Litmus test: make decisions based on whether things are in alignment with your Personal Vision – “will this move me towards or away from my Vision?”



**Actions Plans:** Plenty of opportunities for doing different kinds of action plans. Once your vision is created, determine the actions that will bridge the gap between your current reality and desired future. Define priorities, next steps, and accountabilities. Get tactical. Ground your Vision to a plan to execute out in the real world.

### **The Results:**

After emerging from a graphic coaching experience, you can expect to feel lighter, happier and more aligned. You have greater clarity about yourself, your path and your direction. You know what you want (in fact you have a literal picture of it!) and you have an organized plan of action.

Through the process you have uncovered and ‘flipped’ many patterns, obstacles and faulty assumptions – your energy is working for you rather than against you. You feel really good, perhaps the first time in a long time. You know you have some effort ahead of you. And, you have an ongoing coaching partner to help you do it, rather than sloughing it off and reverting back to your familiar status quo. It’s good deep work that helps you become your next self, easier and quicker.

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WANT TO USE THIS ARTICLE IN YOUR E-ZINE OR WEB SITE? You can, as long as you include this blurb with it: Christina Merkley, "The SHIFT-IT Coach" is creator of the SHIFT-IT Graphic Coaching Process. To learn more about SHIFT-IT, Graphic Coaching and Personal Visioning and Planning, visit <http://shift-it-coach.com>