

WORKING WITH THE BODY IN TRAINING AND COACHING

Mark Walsh

Working with the body in training and coaching

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(Continued overleaf)

“Your body is the ground metaphor of your life, the expression of your existence. It is your bible, your encyclopaedia, your life story.” ~ Gabrielle Roth

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*"Few of us have lost our minds,
but most of us have long ago lost
our bodies." ~ Ken Wilber*

Preface

This short e-book is a guide to working more effectively with the body in training and coaching. It is based on the perspective and tools of the Embodied Facilitator Course (EFC), and will provide readers with the pragmatic essentials of the embodied approach. It will guide you through building your own embodied presence, offer a framework for understanding the field and give practical techniques you can use with clients immediately.

Interactive exercises are offered and video demos linked to for illustration. It is aimed at trainers, coaches of all kinds, teachers, change makers etc – whom I'll refer to simply as 'facilitators' throughout for ease.

~ *Mark Walsh*

Video resources

- ▶ Throughout this e-book there are links to video resources.
- ▶ In the 'video resources' boxes, you can click on the text to follow the link.

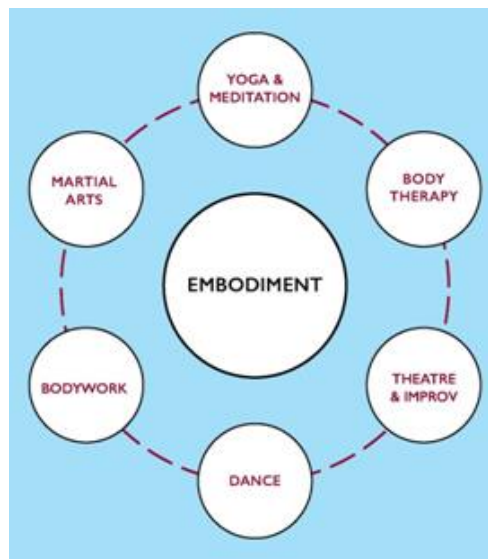
Getting started

What is embodiment and why does it matter in facilitation?

The body is more than just a brain-taxi. It is a key part of who we are, and therefore a key aspect to work with as a facilitator. The world is emerging from the era of body-mind split. The idea that the body, rather than being a hunk of meat, is intimately involved with the human experience, is now mainstream. As well as wisdom traditions such as meditation and martial arts that have historically worked with the body-mind, there are now plenty of studies which show that thinking, emotion, perception, intuition and more are all bodily functions. The word 'embodied' can be used to distinguish between a depth approach to the body, and an approach focused solely on fitness and athleticism. Embodiment concerns the subjective experience of the body – the body as an aspect of who I am, not as a thing. This field of work is influenced by many sources (see image opposite).

Working with the body leads to deeper insights and more lasting change than purely cognitive approaches. If information were enough, Wikipedia would have solved all the world's problems!

Working with the body helps coaches get quickly and powerfully to the heart of issues, and creates changes that stick. As well as helping more kinaesthetic learners, involving the body boosts the power of all methods for all people as we are all more or less embodied! Our habits rest in how we hold ourselves and move, and so do new ways of being. In my experience of working with thousands of facilitators in about 30 countries, embodied approaches to facilitation are some of the most powerful, and a wonderful addition to even the most experienced people's perspective. Usually I find facilitators know the body matters but are not sure how to work with it easily and safely, especially in more mainstream environments. Often they have enjoyed practices such as yoga or dance and would like to transfer some of their skills into working with others pragmatically. This e-book is the practical 'how to' for just that.



Video resources

- [What is embodiment?](#)
- [The body in history](#)
- [An overview of the field](#)
- [How embodied learning works](#)
- [Coaching and the body](#)

Articles

- [The science of embodiment](#)

Reflection questions

- What is the body to you?
Complete the sentence 'the body is...' 20 times quick-fire.
- What challenges that the world faces do you think involve the body, or a lack of embodiment?
- How do you already use the body in facilitation work?
- What is your main embodied training (eg yoga) and how might this bias you?

Ethics and precautions

People sometimes have concerns about working with the body. The key ethical and safety issue for working with the body is consent – certainly for touch. Some cultures (often corporate cultures) may not allow touch and it's perfectly possible to do embodied work without it. Because embodied work tends to go deep quickly and can touch on personal issues, the usual ethics of coaching must be kept impeccably, including confidentiality and avoiding dual relationships. It's also essential to have a firm embodied foundation oneself before doing embodied work.

If people have a trauma history, becoming more aware of the body can lead to overwhelming sensations and emotions – so always give people the choice to do bodily exercises and respect those that decline. Calibration of exercises is vital, asking for consent each time a variable is changed. It's rare for people to become overwhelmed though embodied work if consent and calibration are respected. If someone does, it's useful to know centring (see below) to help them self-regulate. If you are not a therapist do not try to do trauma therapy. Simply empathise, stabilise and refer the participant to a qualified therapist.

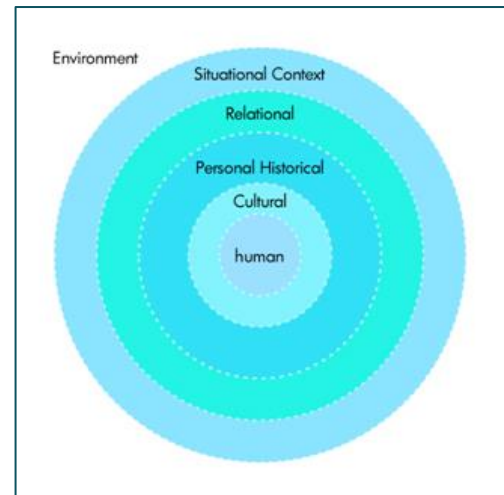
Video resources


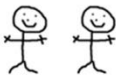


- › [Touch in training and coaching](#)
- › [Trauma and coaching](#)

A simple theoretical framework

When we look at a body we see history, and if clients are not aware of their predispositions, also a likely future. Embodiment is affected by situation, culture, relationship and place (see image) – as well as universal human aspects (eg the distress response). One use of the term ‘embodiment’ refers to someone’s personal historical layer of how they create their way of being in the world continuously and often unconsciously.

Embodiment can be viewed as a type of intelligence, consisting of learnable skills. I use a version of Daniel Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence to map this. I often half-joke all I teach is awareness and choice, and when applied to self and others this is the model opposite. We can be aware of, and make changes to, our intention, posture, movement, breathing, breath, etc – and these are the basic tools of embodied facilitation.



Embodied self awareness > How am I? 	Embodied social awareness > How are they? 
Embodied self management > Managing myself 	Embodied social management > Influencing others 

Video resources

- › [Layers of embodiment](#)
- › [Embodied intelligence](#)

Building your own foundation

An embodied facilitator's foundation is their own embodied intelligence. It can be tempting for many people to want to jump straight into using the tools for others. The techniques will only be effective if an embodiment teacher embodies them! This is a matter of both integrity and efficacy, and it saddens me to see coaches set-themselves up as embodiment teachers after a few weekend workshops, without a long term practice. There are many different practices that can build embodied intelligence capacities, such as tai chi, aikido, yoga and dance. I am not particular what my long-term students practice, only that they have a practice of some kind. Building body awareness is the essential foundation. In what is, to some extent, a disembodied world, a conscious practice is needed to go 'against the stream'. More broadly I believe self-awareness is the foundation of all good facilitation and leadership. The ability to manage oneself is also a vital skill (see 'centring'). We live in embodied relationships to others, so interpersonal embodiment also needs to be developed (for example, solo yoga isn't enough to build all the skills you need for excellence in embodied facilitation). If a facilitator comes to me without a current embodied practice, no matter how well trained and experienced they are in cognitive-verbal-emotional practices, I always help them find one to start the road to mastery*. While the tools of embodied facilitation can be learnt very quickly, to wield them well takes time and personal work.

*NB To be an Embodied Facilitator Course (EFC) trainer my standard is 10,000 hours practice in at least two embodied arts (having just one practice can lead to provincial blind spots), 1000 hours in several other practices, and a long-term meditation/spiritual practice as well as facilitation skill excellence and business experience. Beware anyone teaching embodiment courses without this kind of solid foundation.

"We move through space like we move through life" ~ Stuart Heller

Video resources

- ▶ [Developing yourself](#)
- ▶ [Developing range as a coach](#)

Getting embodied feedback

People have habitual embodiments they no longer notice as they have become invisible – like the taste of your own mouth. These dictate our own behaviour and can be quite apparent to others. To put it another way, we are all shouting at ourselves and only others can hear what we're saying! There are three main types of exercises I use to build awareness of habitual embodiments: one is to show people themselves, another is to have people do a form (eg a yoga posture) and point out how they deviate, and the other is to guide people through a range of options and ask them what feels familiar or comfortable.

You can record yourself on camera easily enough. Even better is to have someone stand like you, walk like you, and see the impression you get. Ask yourself, “What is this person like? What would I think of this person if I just met them?”. Another approach is to try various embodiments – like the four elements model described later – and note which is most familiar: this is likely to be your habit. On the Embodied Facilitator Course (EFC), we spend several months helping people see their own patterns before they work with others: self-awareness is vital to ‘know the lens you’re looking through’.

Video resources

- › [Copying and awareness raising](#)
- › [One on form deviation](#)

Self-awareness practice

We need to know our own state to be effective embodied facilitators, and this can be developed as a skill. A good beginners practice is to ‘check-in’ with yourself multiple times a day and ask, “How am I now?” Try to avoid, ‘ok’, ‘good’ and ‘fine’ as answers. You can also ask, “How do I know that?” or “Where do I feel that?” This will build the basic facilitation skill of self-awareness – we need to know how we are as the foundation of where we’re operating from.

A note on mindfulness

Embodied awareness is a form of mindfulness. Most of the top embodiment teachers are long-term meditators. Students on EFC take up a daily meditation practice. I highly recommend meditation for all those who want to work skilfully with the body.



Centring

As well as being self-aware we also need to self-regulate. This process can be called 'centring': reducing either the fight-flight-freeze, or grasping response. As a facilitator, techniques for coachees aside, just learning to better manage yourself under pressure will be highly beneficial. I always practice centring before a coaching call or when leading a workshop.

There are many ways to centre (I've written a 20,000 word mini-book on the subject), and some suit different people better depending on their habitual pattern with distress or grasping. The ABC technique outlined here is one I've found works well with the majority of people.

Clients can be asked to centre like this before a teaching or coaching session and you will usually see a big difference in how productive and focused the work is as a result. Clients can also be taught to manage pressure and stress using centring, starting with a safe, neutral stimulus like throwing a tissue at them and moving on to more realistic stimuli like tricky feedback. Consent at each stage of this calibration process is important so as not to do harm (see videos). Centring can also be used to manage addictive issues and to enjoy life more (see pleasure centring).

ABCC: Simple Centring Technique

- ▶ **Aware:** be mindful of the present moment using the five senses, especially feeling the body, ground (chair and/or feet) and your breath
- ▶ **Balance:** in posture and attention; have an expansive sense of 'reaching out' (a visualisation of glowing light a bulb may help)
- ▶ **Core relaxed:** relax your mouth and stomach; breathe deeply into your belly
- ▶ **Connected:** look for, or bring to mind, people you care about and who care for you, people that respect you; look for what you have in common with others present

*"If you want to help someone –
get yourself together"*

~ **Wendy Palmer**

*"We are the first system we must
learn to manage" ~ **Stuart Heller***

Video resources

- ▶ [Many ways to centre](#)
- ▶ [Social centring](#)
- ▶ [Pleasure centring](#)
- ▶ [GRACE centring with Francis](#)
- ▶ [Purpose centring](#)
- ▶ [Wake-up centring](#)
- ▶ [Enquiry and values centring](#)
- ▶ [Centring applications](#)
- ▶ [Taking a stand](#)

Embodied facilitation

Five levels of embodied facilitation competence

We can think in terms of 'levels' of our own embodied facilitation skill.

"Movement is what we are, not something we do"

~ Emilie Conrad

› **Micro skills**

Awareness and choice across all aspects of embodiment (breath, posture, movement, etc). See below.

› **Techniques**

Methods you have for working with self and other. Some are given below, you will no doubt come across others. NB people tend to overemphasise this level.

› **Principles**

A deeper understanding of what makes the techniques work. This means you can adapt techniques to suit different situations and participants.

› **Relationship**


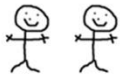


People learn in relationship to others. As a facilitator, it is not so much the tools we use as how we use them in relationship with others that makes the difference.

› **Being**

What underpins it all – our own embodied presence. Again, this trumps technique and is why building your own embodied foundation through long-term practice matters.

Micro-skills

The core mindfulness ‘micro-skills’ needed for embodied facilitation excellence relate to the model of embodied intelligence briefly outlined already (*A simple theoretical framework*, page 5). Here they are in more detail.

<p>Embodied self awareness</p> <p>> How am I?</p> 	<p>Embodied social awareness</p> <p>> How are they?</p> 
<p>Embodied self management</p> <p>> Managing myself</p> 	<p>Embodied social management</p> <p>> Influencing others</p> 

(Embodied self awareness)

Self observation

Feeling ‘in the moment’ sensation and the 8 tools as they shift in your own body. This may be a response to the client or even a taking on of unconscious processes from your coaching client. (Body therapy uses terms such as ‘somatic transference’ and ‘counter-transference’ for these). Effective embodied coaching is based upon the a foundation of self awareness.

(Embodied social awareness)

Client observation

Tracking habits and changes in clients and being a skilled observer is a vital skill. You could think of it as interpersonal mindfulness or deep listening. Body reading (embodied assessments) which contain an element of analysis are based upon this too.

(Embodied self management)

Self regulation

An embodied coach is significantly more effective if they centre themselves and regulate their state. This is the foundation for listening to and influencing clients. See centring.

(Embodied social management)

Client influence

Also known as ‘body leadership’. This may mean helping a client centre to become self-aware and to regulate their own state; to slow and calm them down, or speed/wake them up (yin and yang centring), to get them in touch with values or purpose, to make them laugh, etc. It may be explicit or implicit such as through changing one’s own state to lead, balance, provoke etc.

Loving connection

Loving presence/connection contains elements of all quadrants and is a vital part of effective ethical coaching. It may involve elements of empathic social awareness, self regulation (see Paul Linden’s work), and will influence people. There are various ways ‘into’ this skill such as using metta meditation phrases internally, looking for what is admirable in people and changing your own embodiment.

Prove it!

Influenced by Paul Linden (one of my primary teachers) we take an empirical approach to embodiment: this means we don't ask clients to believe what we say, we ask them to test things out for themselves. This 'no-guru' method is surprisingly rare in the embodiment world due to pre-modern Asian historical influences. It is useful with business and other more sceptical groups.

Building awareness in clients

Just as we described exercises of seeing from the outside, and comparing and contrasting variations for self-awareness (for example, the four elements model), this can also be done with clients. You can, of course, also give direct feedback – and this can be potentially disempowering, doesn't build the skill of self-observation and may not 'stick'. The half-way ground is to ask what people are doing in certain areas, for example "What angle is your pelvis tilted now?" or "What do you do with your breathing when you talk about John?" Peer-feedback can also be used. On the Embodied Facilitator Course (EFC) we've found this helpful if there's habit-blindness and resistance to staff feedback. 'Check-in's should also be used frequently to build awareness of state. Often we do this as 'AAI' – awareness, acceptance (saying 'yes' to what is) and intention (stating how you want to be).

Video resources

- › ['No guru' method](#)

Video resources

- › [Raising embodied awareness](#)
- › [Posture copying](#)

The four elements: a model of preferences

It is useful to have a map of different ways of being embodied. This is not about putting people in boxes (we are all a complex mix and affected by context) but about having a system of understanding *preferences*. One ancient model found in various cultures (with variations) is the four elements model. I use the elements as convenient commonsensical labels; I am not suggesting they exist as literal physical elements as people in times gone by once did! Four types, with intuitive labels, is a small enough number for most people to get to grips with. They can then be combined for more complexity if needed, for example, “He has an earth and fire preference”. I have also worked with embodied versions of MBTI, DISC and the Enneagram; I prefer the four elements model for its intuitive simplicity. I use this model to provide a non-judgmental language for discussing differences, improving communication and helping coachees not only understand themselves but also empathise with others – a major advantage of embodied typology methods. There are several tools we use that use four elements explicitly, for example four elements brain-storming (see video).

I also use the model to highlight strengths and weakness in coaches I’m training and as a way of helping them shift modes when flexibility is needed. With groups it can be used to better understand internal team differences, see team biases, appreciate culture and see where recruitment may be needed. There are many applications; essentially it’s a great language for understudying and applying embodiment. See the accompanying PDF document for a full description of the elements.



Video resources

- › [Four elements introduction](#)
- › [Four elements demonstration](#)
- › [Four elements coaching \(1\)](#)
- › [Four elements coaching \(2\)](#)
- › [Four elements coaching \(Russian/English\)](#)
- › [Four elements yoga](#)

Rhythms model

Life is not just movement but rhythm. In the modern world a sense of natural rhythm has largely been lost. The fact remains that the body-mind has its cycles, and we would be wise as facilitators to be aware of them. These cycles can be short or long and operate in everything we do – from taking a sip of water, to relationships, to work projects, to the course of our life. Cycles exist within cycles making them ‘fractal’. Perhaps the easiest cycle to use – because most Western people are so familiar with it – is that of the seasons. We use this as a model for coaching people to become aware of how biases impact them: for example, quitting work too early, finding new projects hard, struggling to leave relationships, etc. The model can be explored with individuals or groups using handshakes (business friendly), hugs, or more complex movements.

“Of what is the body made? It is made of emptiness and rhythm. At the heart of the world there is no solidity, there is only dance...”

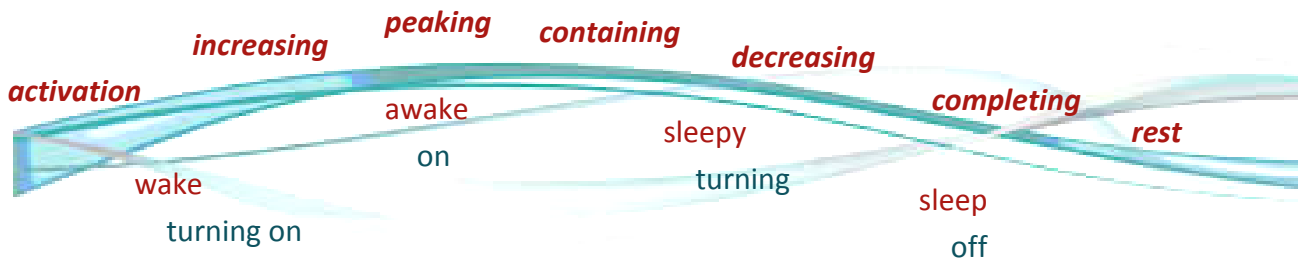
~ **George Leonard**

Season	Features	Images and archetypes	Direction	Life-stage	Simple
Spring	starting, awakening, growing, accelerating, rising, increasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - blossom - light green shoots - conception and birth - spring showers 	up	childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - turning on / waking (I) - greeting (we) - preparing (it)
Summer	fulfilling, expressing, full growth, full speed, high, maximum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fruit - full green leaves - mature animals and families - sun 	forward	early adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on / awake (I) - relating (we) - do (it)
Autumn	containing, slowing, declining, falling, less speed, decreasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - storing nuts - falling brown leaves - ageing animals - cloud and drizzle 	back	middle age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - turning off / sleepy (I) - parting (we) - stop (it)
Winter	ending and preparing, resting, slowest, low, minimum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no fruit or leaves - hibernation and death - snow 	down	elderhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - off / sleeping (I) - alone (we) - don't do (it)

Variations

(simplified versions below the curve)

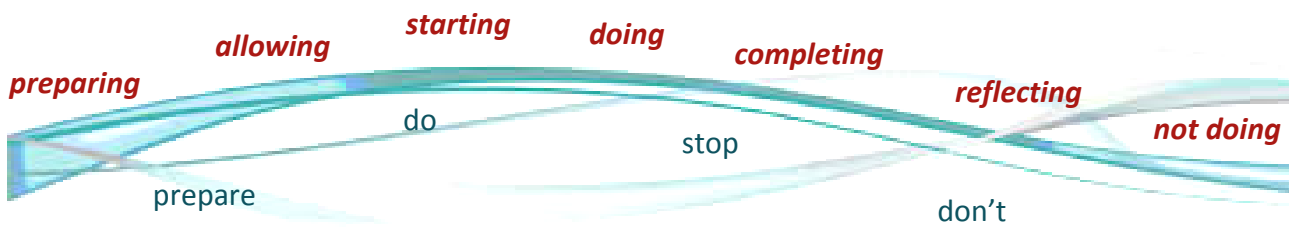
Subjective flow: 'I' cycle



Relationship flow: 'we' cycle



Action flow: 'it' cycle



Coaching tools

Awareness and choice overarching principle

Much embodied work is essentially helping clients build awareness of current patterns and gain greater freedom.

Walking coaching

Walking is a surprisingly powerful way to work with clients. Just moving from a chair can help 'stuck' coachees. You can use walking to explore and contrast different ways of moving and being (without getting too 'Monty Python'). You can also suggest specific things for clients to try – for example, pushing more from the back foot to add confidence or bringing more awareness to self, the task (where they're going), others or the environment (I, we, it, its model). Working with walking is a business friendly way to get people moving.

Video resources

▶ [Walking as embodied practice](#)

Simple centring coaching

A very simple yet powerful way to use centring is to ask a person or group what the key question is or what their options are, get them to centre and then ask again. This can solve a lot of time in coaching and get straight to the heart of things!

Centring as a coach before a session, or as a speaker before an event, is also highly recommended to be at your best.

Video resources

▶ [Centring with coaching clients](#)

▶ [Purpose / centring coaching](#)

Exaggeration and contrast

A useful way to bring awareness to an embodied habit and explore it further is to exaggerate it, then contrast with its opposite. Going between extremes can help people gain insight, process 'unfinished business' and also identify a small 'somatic marker' which can be used as an early warning signal of a habitual response kicking in.

Video resources

▶ [Exaggeration and contrast](#)

Distinction coaching

Often people are stuck in a way of being because they have unconsciously conflated two variables – for example, people who have no distinction between aggressive and assertive, or passivity and receptivity (classic confusions around the 'ying-yang' polarities which can be at the heart of many issues with clients). Using the body, a person can find a distinction between two embodied patterns – eg being creative and being flaky, or being confident versus being arrogant, so they have greater choice.

Video resources

▶ [Distinction coaching](#)

Creating simulators

In order to gain insight into new situations and practice new ways of doing things, you can help clients simulate situations they are in. People will often describe what they want to work on with words such as ‘my boss is looking over my shoulder’, ‘I feel like I’m being pulled around’ or ‘it’s like a weight on my shoulders’. You can then literally create the metaphor they’re suggesting and look for insights and greater choice. Much embodied work can be seen as creating virtual reality practice grounds for life, such as with centring.

Deep listening to the body

Encouraging clients to tune into their bodies is often very helpful for gaining insight. When asking a client to reflect on a question, you can ask them to become aware of sensations in their body. Slightly more adventurously, you can ask them to ask their body a question. Methods such as ‘Focusing’ go much deeper into this. Even asking a corporate group to pause for a moment during a meeting and become aware of their bodies can be very useful in opening new possibilities.

Process work and free movement practices

One frame for embodied work is that the body is a verb not a noun, and that many of people’s difficulties stem from the blocked *process* of the body. While more complex process work is beyond the scope of this short e-book, it is worth including the simplest way of using this approach – giving clients permission to move in whatever ways feel right. This can be explored more fully in free movement sessions like Authentic Movement or 5 Rhythms. With more open-minded groups, such as during the EFC training, we often incorporate free movement and process work. Letting the body freely express as a balance to ‘form’ work such as centring is also important. We find that people who have focused on ‘freedom’ practices such as conscious dance may lack self-regulation and boundaries, while those who have focused on form work like traditional Asian martial arts can be uptight control-freaks.

Body reading

It is natural to make guesses about people from their embodiment. As social creatures we are doing this all the time, as are children and animals. True body reading is differentiated from body prejudices (eg ‘fat people are jolly’) and interpretations also need to take into account the effect of simple physical injuries. As a facilitator body reading is very useful for better understanding the people you’re working with, and helping them learn more effectively. Some people claim certain embodied patterns always mean certain things, while others believe body reading is impossible to do accurately. I take a middle ground – holding an assessment lightly with humility, more as an enquiry around a suggested theme. One learns to see generalised patterns such as how the four elements are embodied, and more specific indicators such as movement patterns and chronic muscular holding. Body reading can be done more visually-analytically, or more empathically (feeling what patterns ‘taste’ like by trying them). As ever, knowing one’s own embodied habits is key as this is lens you will see and experience through.

Video resources

› [How to read a body](#)

Designing practices

Designing practices for clients can lead to deep lasting change. In order to build a new skill or new way of being, information isn't enough – Wikipedia has not fixed the world's problems – practice is needed. A practice can be taking on a method like salsa, aikido or yoga, or a micro practice such as centring when you turn your computer on. During EFC training we ask students to make sure their practices are:

- ▶ **intentional:** it has a clear aim to build a certain way of being
- ▶ **dedicated:** you are not doing anything else that requires attention
- ▶ **ritualised:** this can be as simple as having a clear beginning and end
- ▶ **reflected upon:** this maximises learning (preferably in a community of support/challenge and with experienced teachers)

Richard Strozzi-Heckler's and Ginny Whitelaw's books are excellent on the power of practice.

Relational exercises

Meaningful human life is a relational activity, so in embodiment work we need to include relational exercises.

Activities such as partner dance, theatre improv and certain martial arts can be great for revealing patterns and developing more range in relationship (awareness and choice). Coaches can also use simpler methods. For example, touching palms with a coachee and noticing the contact style can reveal lots about their preferences. Using some form of physical connection, you can walk around a room with a client and notice patterns of communication, leading and following, resistance and disconnecting etc. As a coach, you can create 'simulators' (as described above) which are relational.

Further examples of coaching with the body

Coaching using the body is easier shown than told, so here are some video examples.

Video resources

- ▶ [Practice as home](#)
- ▶ [Designing practices with clients](#)
- ▶ [Your practice can be anything](#)

Video resources

- ▶ [Empathy exercises](#)
- ▶ [Overview of partner exercises](#)
- ▶ [Leader-follower](#)

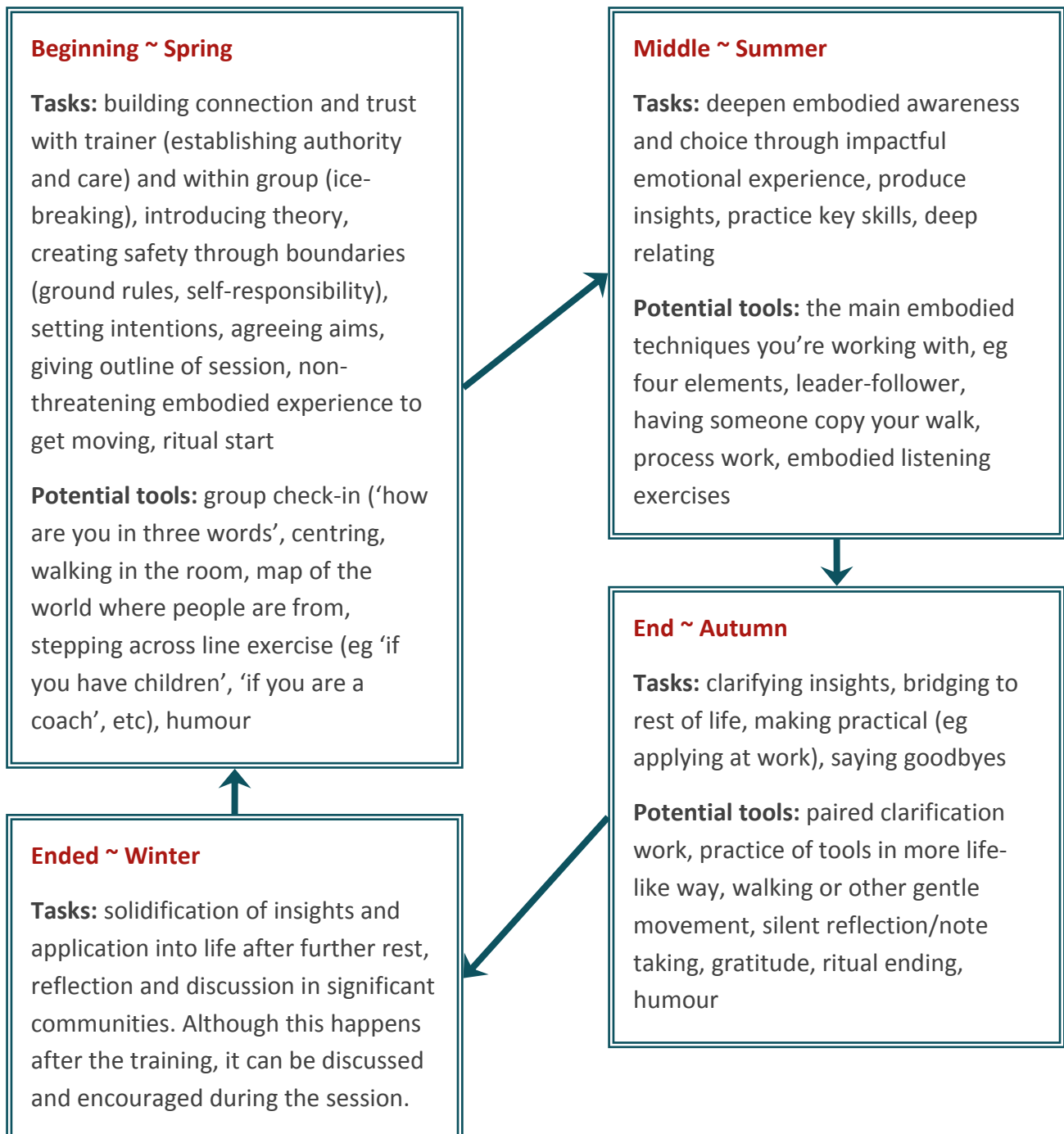
Video resources

- ▶ [Body tools for coaches and trainers](#)
- ▶ [Purpose / career coaching](#)
- ▶ [Financial coaching](#)
- ▶ [Working with yes and no](#)
- ▶ [Taking up space/confidence](#)
- ▶ [Russian style](#)

Facilitating groups

Ways to structure sessions

There are many varied and creative ways to structure a session with groups, including the classic 'beginning-middle-end', Joseph Campbell's 'hero's journey' and the 'four seasons' model previously outlined. When I design sessions I also consider going into and out of depth by building relationship and letting go of them, moving from theory to pragmatism, and from self to other. Embodied group sessions can be any length; for those new to the work a minimum of two hours is recommended.



'RAMP-RAP' framework

We also use the 'RAMP-RAP' framework at EFC which can be applied to any exercise within a bigger session:

R	Relationship	- develop a connection with the learners
A	Aim	- have and communicate a clear purpose for the exercise
M	Motivation	- connect the aim to what matters for learners
P	Practice method	- give clear step-by-step instructions on how to do the technique
R	Results	- highlight immediate effects and longer term results of the practice
A	Application	- link the exercise to people's lives so they can apply the exercise
P	Practice	- help people establish a practice so learners develop the skill

Video resources

- › [Structuring training](#)
- › [Outline of an embodiment group session](#)
- › [Group work overview](#)
- › [Example of embodied work with large group](#)

Excellence in embodied facilitation: 13 essential components

I am an unashamed snob when it comes to embodied work. Having spent thousands of hours teaching and tens of thousands of hours experiencing embodied work of almost every imaginable kind, one develops certain standards. I have sought out teachers worldwide because they were the best in the field, and have tried to make explicit what made them so good. While designing EFC

with my colleague Francis Briers we decided early on that it should be both a multiple-perspectives course, and a pass-fail course with a high standard. This meant we had to design a set of criteria for practical assessments that would apply across disciplines, and could be fairly assessed by different people. The things we consider make an embodied session excellent are:

Video resources

- › [In depth description of the criteria](#)
- › [Conversational description of the criteria](#)

Ethics	- do no harm, service orientation, consent and calibration
Embodiment	- facilitator's own embodiment and state-management
Aims	- clear aims
Principles	- using the principles of embodiment, not just tricks and tools
Tools	- using a variety of techniques (eg breath, posture, visualisation etc)
Listening	- being tuned in to participants
Adaptation	- adapting to participants, individually and culturally
Body leadership	- influencing participants positively
Language	- clear language matched to participants
Rhythm	- having a good flow: beginning, middle, end
Testing	- using an empirical, not belief-based, approach
Application	- helping participants take the work into the real world
Change the world	- using embodied work for good

The 12 tenets of embodiment

Embodiment distilled into 12 principles.

T0	Layers	- situation, relationship, culture, disposition and environment are all embodied; we are layers of adapted response to history
T1	Comfort	- the body reveals what's familiar; what we have practised feels easy
T2	Joy	- delight reveals what's needed or longed for
T3	Holographic	- the body reveals our way of being in all things
T4	Deviation	- inability to follow a form reveals habitual patterns; habits assert themselves and are exposed by form
T5	Guidance	- the body can guide our life; when listened, to the body gives wisdom
T6	Practice	- we become what we practice; we learn to embody new ways of being
T7	Contrast	- the body reveals and learns by exaggeration, contrast and differentiation
T8	Social	- we learn in relationship, and naming is powerful; by being witnessed and naming something, we deepen insight and declare new futures
T9	Integration	- we can transfer embodied learning into daily life by creating micro indicators and postures, and by designing a practice routine
<i>Supplemental tenets</i>		
T10	Process	- the body is a process and it benefits us to listen and follow
T11	Self-regulation	- the fight-flight-freeze and craving responses can be managed
T12	Trigger	- shadow is revealed by triggering and infatuation (NB not covered in this book)

The science of embodiment

Recent advances in both experiential psychology, embodied cognition and neuroscience are extremely helpful for understanding the science of embodiment. The book 'Rip it Up' by Richard Wiseman is the best summary of recent psychology. Amy Cuddy and her 'power poses' have become well known but her research is now in dispute. Mandy Blake has written on the neuroscientific connections. In 'selling' embodied work to mainstream audiences, a little neuroscience – on say implicit procedural learning or the effects of stress on the neo-cortex – goes a long-way. A word of caution though: neuroscience has become somewhat fashionable in facilitation and is often presented quite clumsily (known as 'neurobunk') to prove a point.

Video resources

- ▶ [The science of body language / embodiment](#)

Articles

- ▶ [The science of embodiment](#)

Reflection questions

- ▶ Having read the models above, it's worth reflecting on your own strengths and areas to develop. You can do this in written form or as a conversation with another facilitator.
- ▶ What are your strengths as an embodied facilitator?
- ▶ Where do you need to build skills?
- ▶ How does your 4 element preference show up as a facilitator?
- ▶ How good are you at centring under pressure (give examples)?
- ▶ How would you rate yourself on the four quadrant model of embodied intelligence?
- ▶ What practices do you have that build skills in each of these areas?
- ▶ What peers, mentors and communities trained in embodiment are you around regularly to help you develop?
- ▶ How does your season preference show up as a facilitator, eg rushing beginnings or endings?
- ▶ Looking through the criteria for excellence in embodied facilitation, what are your two strongest and weakest areas?
- ▶ What other professional skills do you need to develop to be a better embodied facilitator, eg marketing?

In conclusion

I hope you've found this short introductory e-book useful. Please do take to heart the ethical considerations, and recommendation to practice deeply yourself before working with others. This book is deliberately short to make the work accessible... there's much more to say. Dive into the many, many free YouTube videos, come to one-day workshops or to the Embodied Facilitator Course to delve deeper. It is my firm belief that many of the issues the world faces are related to embodiment. I encourage you to study and share embodied work, and help us all get our bodies – and therefore our hearts and souls –back again! This body of work has made a huge difference to me personally, and I know can be great gift for others too.

Contacts and resources

Please feel free to get in touch.

- **Email:** mark@integrationtraining.co.uk
- **Personal Facebook account:** not for the faint-hearted www.facebook.com/mark.walsh.9256
- **Facebook groups:** search 'open embodiment group'
- **Twitter:** @warkmalsh
- **Business website:** www.integrationtraining.co.uk
- **Purpose Black Belt:** find and sell the work you love www.purposeblackbelt.com
- **Embodied Facilitator Course (EFC):** embodiment train-the-trainer courses in London and Moscow; one-day events worldwide. If you've liked this book and want to go much deeper this is the course for you www.embodiedfacilitator.com
- **Online learning resource:** www.thebodyofcoaching.com
- **Embodiment applied to yoga:** www.embodiedyogaprinciples.com
- **YouTube channel:** 1000+ videos www.youtube.com/user/IntegrationTraining
- We also recommend Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen (USA), Ginny Whitelaw (USA), Paul Linden (USA), Strozzi Institute (USA), Wendy Palmer and her European students (USA/Asia/Europe), Stuart Heller (USA/Russia).
- Books by Richard Strozzi Heckler, Ginny Whitelaw, Wendy Palmer, Stuart Heller or e-books by Paul Linden

Video resources

- [A poem on embodiment](#)
- [Using humour in coaching](#)
- [Leadership shadow](#)
- [Media and gender](#)
- [ICF competencies](#)
- [Simple bodywork for coaches](#)
- [Embodied yoga principles](#)
- [How to take yoga off the mat](#)
- [Three centres coaching](#)
- [Embodiment and technology](#)
- [Embodying your offer](#)

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A body of work does not come from thin air. The EFC perspective has been developed by me together with co-trainers Francis Briers and Alexandra Vilvovskaya – and many others have helped. My primary mentor, Paul Linden, has been a massive influence. Richard Strozzi-Heckler, Wendy Palmer, Stuart Heller and Ginny Whitelaw have all been influential, along with many schools of dance and body therapy including hakomi, aikido, yoga, comedy improv, and more. It's hard to say exactly what came from what for me these days, and I'm not big on people trying to claim areas of embodiment as 'theirs', but I wanted to give a nod of appreciation to some of those who have influenced this body of work.

About Mark Walsh

Don't you hate all the lop-sided bullshit, boasting and omissions of biographies? I do, but here goes. What's relevant... I did a psychology degree, then worked in outdoor education and in areas of conflict for a charity applying aikido 'off the mat'. I have an aikido black-belt and spent several years doing that full time as a live-in student. I am a Buddhist, long-term meditator and yogi. I founded Integration Training 9 years ago and have worked with everyone from Unilver to L'oreal to Shell in the corporate world to The Army of Sierra Leone, Moscow gay community and with Occupy. Basically I've done embodied work with bloody everyone and have been utterly obsessed with it my whole adult life. I founded the Embodied Facilitator Course, Embodied Yoga, and an online course called Purpose Black Belt.

› [My story on video](#)