

We have a poem on our classroom wall by Shel Silverstein, that reads:

**The Voice**

There is a voice inside of you  
That whispers all day long,  
“I feel that this is right for me,  
I know that *this* is wrong.”  
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend  
Or wise man can decide  
What’s right for you-just listen to  
The voice that speaks inside.

It is our structural reminder to all coaches that it doesn’t matter how much expertise or experience we possess, the only people who truly know what is right for our clients is our clients. Our role is merely to assist them in trusting the voice inside. The challenge for us is not getting in the way or trying to help as our clients struggle to listen. It may seem useful and necessary at times to provide some insight, connect a few dots, or share a story to ease our clients’ effort and/or avoid failure. Yet, if our voice becomes part of the process it makes their voice less relevant. Our input could further condition our clients to seek answers outside of themselves when they were born with the knowledge within. If we fully embrace the ICF coaching philosophy that “people are creative, resourceful and whole” then it’s not necessary for us to influence the process. Our clients have it within themselves to solve their own issues. We just need to ask bigger, better or more meaningful questions so they trust and act on the voice inside.