Samantha Hardy presents...

The Melodrama of Conflict
The Melodrama of Conflict
Heroine

- Virtuous (necessary in order to gain sympathy and motivate others to help her)
- Passive and helpless (acted upon, mute, needs someone to rescue her, stuck with no choices)
Villain

• De-personalised
• Evil (always assumed to have bad intentions)
• Active and powerful
• Upsets the status quo
Father Figure

- Powerful
- Smart
- Recognises heroine’s virtue
- Punishes villain
- Restores status quo
Hero

- Totally devoted to heroine
- Practically useless
- Not as smart as villain
- Although well-intentioned, can sometimes make things worse
Melodramatic Plot

- Sensational
- Giant leaps, plot twists
- Villain challenges heroine’s virtue
- Fight to recognise and restore virtue
- Villain over-powered
- Dream justice
The Tragedy of Resolution
Tragedy, choice and learning

• Complicated plots
• Characters neither good nor bad, complex and flawed
• Hero has to talk himself through the problem
• Hero has choices (although may not be easy ones)
• May not be a happy ending, but always learning and growth
Coaching the client to develop her/his inner hero.
The Conflict Coach

• Refuse to play the role of father figure – stay with the client as bumbling melodramatic hero.
  – On the client’s side, empathetic
  – But practically useless

• Be the mirror to help client talk to self

• Help the client turn from helpless heroine to active hero
Working with the client’s story

• Ask the client to set a goal – take responsibility right from the start.
• Personalize the villain – ask for their name and keep using it.
• Help client to complexify characters and plot.
Working with the client’s story

• Complexify the story – ask for details (without challenging).
  – Ask about client’s actions.
  – Ask about history (pre-villain’s action).
  – Ask about other characters.
  – Use non-universal language and unpack universals used by client.
  – Use tentative language to explore the villain’s actions and motivations, explore possibilities even where client is dismissive.
Working with the client’s story

- Highlight past choices (good and bad).
- Explore the client’s suffering.
- Ask the client to tell the story from other perspectives (role play a different character).
- Carefully challenge the notion of dream justice.
- Focus on choices and learning.
- Focus on improvement and artistry (not a return to the status quo).
Reflection
REAL Conflict Coaching encourages and assists people to develop the capacity to engage in reflective practice in their future conflict interactions, for the purpose of reflective learning and the development of artistry.

Engagement
REAL Conflict Coaching supports people to constructively engage with, rather than avoid, conflict. REAL Conflict Coaches assist people to find the right level of depth at which to engage, and to sustain that engagement in the long term if necessary.

Artistry
REAL Conflict Coaching builds peoples’ capacities to engage in future conflict at the level of artistry. It encourages and supports individuals to go beyond the merely satisfactory, and to achieve excellence.

Learning
REAL Conflict Coaching is grounded strongly in principles of adult learning. It supports people to engage in lifelong reflective learning.
The 5 Cs

**CLARITY**
Gain clarity about the conflict situation

**COMPREHENSION**
Understand their own and the other person’s needs and goals

**CHOICES**
Identify and evaluate their choices for moving forward

**CONFIDENCE**
Develop confidence about managing conflict and achieving their goals

**COMPETENCE**
Develop conflict management skills so that they can constructively engage in the conflict

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