



# **COACHING EXERCISE #19**

## **Communicating Confidentiality**

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This sample text may be useful in coaching agreements with your clients to communicate confidentiality in today's digital age.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As an executive coach, I am ethically and legally bound to protect the confidentiality of our communications. I will only release information about our work to others with your written permission or in response to a court order. There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to breach confidentiality in order to protect you or others from harm. If I have information that indicates that a child or elderly or disabled person is being abused,

I must report that to the appropriate state agency. If a client is an imminent risk to him/herself or makes threats of imminent violence against another, I am required to take protective actions. These situations are quite rare in coaching practices. If such a situation occurs in our relationship, I will make every effort to discuss it with you before taking any action.

### **Email Communications**

I use email communication and text messaging only with your permission and only for administrative purposes unless we have made another agreement. That means that email exchanges and text messages with my office should be limited to things like setting and changing appointments, coaching assignments, and other related issues. Please do not email me about personal matters because email is not a secure way to contact me. If you need to discuss a personal matter with me, please feel free to call me so we can discuss it on the phone or wait so we can discuss it during your coaching session. The telephone or face-to-face context simply is much more secure as a mode of communication.

### **Text Messaging**

Because text messaging is a very unsecure and impersonal mode of communication, I do not text message to nor do I respond to text messages from anyone in a coaching relationship with me. So, please do not text message me unless we have made other arrangements.

### **Social Media**

I do not communicate with, or contact, any of my clients through social media platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and/or Facebook. In addition, if I discover that I have accidentally established an online relationship with you, I will cancel that relationship. This is because these types of casual social contacts can create significant security risks for you.

I participate on various social networks, but not in my professional capacity. If you have an online presence, there is a possibility that you may encounter me by accident. If that occurs, please discuss it with me during our time together. I believe that any communications with clients online have a high potential to compromise the professional relationship. In addition, please do not try to contact me in this way. I will not respond and will terminate any online contact no matter how accidental.

I do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients on any social networking site (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+). I believe that adding friends or contacts on these sites can compromise your confidentiality and our respective privacy. It may also blur our boundaries of our coaching relationship.

Additionally, I will not follow you back on media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. I only follow other health professionals and do not follow current or former clients because I believe that casual viewing of client's online content outside of our coaching sessions can create some possible confusion in regard to whether it's being done as part of our coaching work or to satisfy my personal curiosity. If you have questions about this, please bring them up so we can discuss them in more detail.

## **Blogging**

I publish a blog on my website ([www.results.envisialearning.com](http://www.results.envisialearning.com)) and I post psychology news on Twitter and LinkedIn. I have no expectation that you as a client will want to follow my blog or Twitter and/or LinkedIn feeds. However, if you use an easily recognizable name on Twitter, LinkedIn, and/or Google+ and I happen to notice that you have followed me there, we may briefly discuss it and its potential impact on our coaching relationship. My primary concern is your privacy.

## **Websites**

I have a website that you are free to access ([www.envisialearning.com](http://www.envisialearning.com)). I use it for professional reasons to provide information to others about me and my practice. You are welcome to access and review the information that I have on my website and, if you have questions about it, we should discuss this during your therapy sessions.

## **Web Searches**

I will not use web searches to gather information about you without your permission. I believe that this violates your privacy rights; however, I understand that you might choose to gather information about me in this way. Today there is an incredible amount of information available about individuals on the internet, much of which may actually be known to that person and some of which may be inaccurate or unknown. If you encounter any information about me through web searches, or in any other fashion for that matter, please discuss this with me during our coaching work together so that we can deal with it and its potential impact on our coaching relationship.

Recently it has become fashionable for clients to review their coaches on various websites. Unfortunately, psychologists cannot respond to such comments and related errors because of confidentiality restrictions. If you encounter such reviews of me or any professional with whom

you are working, please share it with me so we can discuss it and its potential impact on your coaching. Please do not rate my work with you while we are in working together on any of these websites. This is because it has a significant potential to damage our ability to work together.