

*This piece by Steven Goldstein illustrates a ROG coaching application in the U.K. financial markets sector. The main key theory map used is Self/Other/Situation (SOS) and raising awareness of these lenses through dialogue.*

## **Steven Goldstein: How a ROG approach helps me, my coaching and my clients.**

When asked if I could write an article which demonstrated some practical applications of the ROG approach, I tried to place myself in the shoes of someone curious about ROG. I pondered how best to demonstrate its validity and how it has helped me as a coach to be more effective with my clients.

The immersive experience of the ROG programme changed me and shifted my approach to working with clients. I began to see my coachees as part of a complex system and network of relationships, past, present and future, multi-dimensional, ever changing, ever evolving, ever emerging. I became more conscious of how these were part of them and how these were impacting the challenges they faced. I also became more aware of the client and their situation on myself, and how I could use this awareness to help them in our coaching work.

So how does this play out in real world examples and how does this differ from other coaching approaches?

Prior to my ROG experience, I aimed to help clients to clarify their goals and desired solutions, explore them and then work towards achieving them. Whilst this was helpful to the client, I often felt it was only partially so and was limited in what it could achieve. There is a metaphor in coaching, about coaching being like peeling back the layers of an onion. My old style of coaching worked on that person as just being one isolated onion. However, when coaching in a ROG approach, you find that the person has many onions that they are part of, and these onions are arranged multidimensionally and haphazardly. To support the client, you must not just peel back the layers on their 'self' onion but help them explore and discover the other 'onions' they are part of, or which impact them and their situation.

The ROG approach not only allows you to help the client see a picture of themselves close up, but it allows them to step into it, to come back out of it, to walk back from it, to see it from a distance, and to see it come to life. The ROG approach doesn't just help them work towards goals or solutions, it helps them clarify their situation, understand what needs to change, and works with them to support them as they make and embed meaningful change.

An example of this was recent work I did with a client who had become increasingly anxious and unsettled. Over time, this individual had become increasingly lost, his shoulders had become hunched, his head was down. He had become increasingly risk averse and was now someone who saw threats whereas previously he would see opportunity. He wanted to work with a coach to help him deal with and work past his anxiety. He got a lot more than that.

The individual was a senior manager at a large Investment firm who had been hired a few years ago to be one of the eventual successors to the co-CEOs. As we worked together, his world and perspective which had become closed-in and narrow focused began to change. He started to zoom in and zoom out and as he did so, perceived an increasingly bigger and more

complex picture. He started to become aware of the wider field in multi dimensions, of the different complex relationships within them and most crucially how these were impacting him. He not only saw with increasing clarity where he was, but also could recognise how he had got there, and most crucially where he could potentially go next.

As we went through this process, the client started to experience some quite dramatic shifts, and as he did so, I was then there to both support him and work with him to make these shifts sustainable. The client rediscovered his old ‘mojo’, his spark, his energy. The drive which was part of his former self, and which had helped him throughout his career, had returned. He started making changes, not just to himself but to the business he was a key part of. The business itself had been going through a bit of a slump, but he now started to effect it positively. The bounce was not just within him but was also now occurring in the business around him.

Previously, my coaching would have probably focused on just the client and what they could do to help themselves. But with the ROG approach, I engaged far more in a process of dialogue and discussion, exploring what is happening for my client and sharing with him what I was experiencing and noticing. This helped him become increasingly aware, and new avenues for exploration emerged. The conversation then expanded, and we explored these new avenues. This did mean that at times we needed to go to some uncomfortable places that provoked reflection and evoked strong feelings for the client. Handled carefully and with skill, these lead to powerful new insights, discoveries, and awareness. This is truly an emergent process.

I chose this example, because it illustrates the ROG approach in a concise and simple way. I have many examples similar to this I could have used. Examples where teams have come to life, or where the explorations have led to new insights and discoveries that were not part of the original aim of the coaching.

One word best sums up the ROG approach for me, ‘Power’. Power to effect positive change. Power to help others, to heal wounds, to drive people forward to effect change in themselves and others. It is the power of illumination that reveals what is hidden in the darkness and the shadows. It is the power of the human spirit which all are born with, but which can wither away over time. And for me as a coach, it is a power to empower others. That is the power of the ROG way.

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