



# PATHFINDING OUTFITTERS

## Exploring challenges Coaching Circle



See a challenge  
with fresh eyes

A Coaching Circle is a team of 3 to 5 equals who meet to discover fresh ways to understand and innovative ways to meet leadership challenges. This exploration provides the whole team with the opportunity to understand their work better. Trust grows as members continue to offer mutual support over multiple meetings.

### Be mindful

- The purpose is to listen deeply, attending to, sharing and building on the images, metaphors, feelings and gestures that the challenge story evokes. Suspend the desire to download quick fixes, pet theories or sympathy. Access curiosity, compassion and openness to what wants to emerge from the process.
- Closely follow the steps and allocated times. They guide the Circle through the U: a period of listening; a moment of stillness and reflection; a period of enrichment of the challenge story with the emergence of new perspectives and new possibilities for action. **Stillness is essential**, take the full three minutes.
- Create a distraction free circle that allows **an hour of focused attention**. Writing and drawing materials help capture or sketch insights and images.
- It's easy to get bogged down in *might-be-nice-to-know* details of the situation. The process works best when the circle attends to and builds from what is presented as the essence of the challenge.



### Roles

**One circle member presents a specific challenge** that they are currently facing, a challenge in which they play a key role. The challenge can be outlined in 15 minutes and the presenter wants new perspectives.

The other circle members serve as **coaches**, listening deeply, attending to and sharing what presentation of the challenge evokes.

One coach takes responsibility for managing the time and reading the instructions to the circle at each step. Another coach takes notes of key points, a third graphically records images that arise throughout the conversation.

1	2 min	<b>Select challenge presenter, timekeeper, note taker, &amp; image recorder</b>
2	15 min	<p><b>Intention statement by challenge presenter</b></p> <p>Take a moment to reflect on your sense of calling. Then present your challenge, answering these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Current situation:</b> What key challenge or question are you up against?</li> <li>• <b>Stakeholders.</b> How might others view this situation?</li> <li>• <b>Intention:</b> What future do you want to create?</li> <li>• <b>Threshold.</b> What do you need to let go of and what do you need to learn?</li> <li>• <b>Help:</b> Where do you want help or new ideas?</li> </ul> <p>Coaches listen deeply. They may ask clarifying questions but not give advice or make observations.</p>
3	3 min	<p><b>Stillness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to your heart. Connect to what you have heard with your heart.</li> <li>• Listen to what resonates. What images, metaphors, feelings or gestures* come up for you and capture the core of all that you have sensed in the presentation of the challenge?</li> </ul>
4	10 min	<p><b>Mirroring and embodying</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each coach shares the images, metaphors, feelings and gestures that came up in the stillness or while listening to the presentation of the challenge. (What's shared need not be complete or even make sense to the person sharing.)</li> </ul>
5	20 min	<p><b>Generative dialogue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenge presenter reflects aloud: <i>Hearing these responses, what touched me? What resonated with me? What questions and reflections come up for me now?</i></li> <li>• All reflect on the mirroring and embodiment and the challenge presenter's reflections. Move into a flow of dialogue that surfaces new perspectives on and new possibilities for the challenge. Stay in service of the challenge and the presenter's journey without pressure to fix or resolve the challenge.</li> </ul>
6	8 min	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By coaches</li> <li>• By the challenge presenter: <i>How do I now see my situation and the way forward?</i></li> <li>• Thanks and appreciations, finishing with the challenge presenter.</li> </ul>
7	2 min	<b>Individual journaling to capture key insights and learning</b>

\*Gestures are body positions, movements and facial expressions that arise in response to what we sense. Sharing gestures without explanation or commentary is a powerful form of mirroring.