

DIG COACHING PRACTICE



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What Does Modality Have to Do with Organization? Everything!

DIG Coaching is the leading coaching practice for adults and children looking to manage attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms and attention deficit disorder (ADD) symptoms. We focus on managing symptoms of attention deficit disorder, adults with ADD, or adults who have children with ADHD. DIG Coaching, led by attention coach Jeff Copper, helps adults and children (particularly those diagnosed with or impacted by attention deficit disorder or its symptoms) in life or business who are stuck, overwhelmed, or frustrated. DIG Coaching helps adults and children get unstuck and moving forward by helping to open their minds and pay attention to what works.

What Does Modality Have to Do with Organization? Everything!

By Jeff Copper, Manager & Head Coach, DIG Coaching Practice LLC



The American Heritage Dictionary defines “modality” as a tendency to conform to a general pattern or belong to a particular group or category. As a coach, I define modality as “a prevailing style or strategy, which consistently reoccurs when an individual learns, processes, organizes, or interacts with the world.”

In layman’s terms, a person’s modality is a prevailing tendency—not to be confused with a talent—that a person is born with. It’s what comes naturally for them, meaning it is as individual as they are. Sadly, very few people even know what a modality is, or recognize its importance, let alone understand what their own modalities are. This is understandable given that little emphasis is placed on modalities in our culture; rather it’s a “one size fits all” mentality and a “you must do it this way or you’re broken” society.

Understanding your own modalities (with specificity) can be powerful and life changing. To illustrate these points, I’d like to share with you how some of my clients excavated their modalities, applied them, and experienced tremendous results in the process:

Stacy had no conscious knowledge that her modality was **verbal processor** (i.e., she thinks out loud). She needs to say her thoughts out loud for them to register. For example, Stacy has lost days, and sometimes weeks, searching for misplaced keys. Now, she simply tells her daughter where she puts the keys upon her arrival home, which is enough for her to remember where they are when she needs them. Imagine the relief in learning that all she has to do is “say it to remember it.” Stacy has used this modality to revolutionize her life.

Mark thrived at West Point because it emphasized his routine and logic modality. Later in life, he struggled with organization at home. Rediscovering that he processes information in a linear and logical fashion, Mark was able to witness how important routines were in his life. By managing his routines, he could organize his world. For example, he placed a table in the garage between where he got out of the car and the door to the house, thereby creating a linear path between the two. When tasks come up, he simply puts the item or reminder on the table. As part of his daily routine, he stops at the table to pick up his project of the day and proceeds into the house to complete it. By managing his routines, Mark manages his world.

Wendy knew she was **visual** but never realized that this modality was the driver to how she naturally organized her world. Think about this...dirty clothes on the floor represented an subconscious “to-do” in her mind. Can you imagine having visual reminders of everything you need to do in a day, a week, or a month? Wendy saw it and called it clutter! Realizing it was her organizational style, she took control by arranging items and placing them behind a visual barrier. She then scheduled time to remove the barrier and complete the task behind it. In the end, clutter was eliminated and organization returned.

Mary Lynn needed to take charge of her finances, but was lost...that is, until she called on her natural **visual and tactile** modalities. We created an experiment whereby she placed her money into categorized envelopes at the beginning of the month. Throughout the month, she paid her bills from each of the sorted envelopes. This exercise gave her the tactile and visual stimulation that was missing from recording

checks into a checkbook, so it made the money real for her. And, with a “real” mental picture of money and a natural system for categorizing it, she could begin to manage what she couldn’t before. In the process, Mary Lynn discovered that she is good at working on projects and doing mindless tasks, but is challenged when she is working on routine tasks that require some thought (e.g., managing each transaction in a checkbook). By placing money in each envelope, she was budgeting the money “just once” and then mindlessly distributing the money from each envelope throughout the month as necessary, without guilt or question. If there was not enough money towards the end of the month, managing that

situation became a “project,” not a routine task, and was managed as such. Again, this played into her prevailing way of completing tasks. By bringing conscious thought to her modalities, she could move forward to effectively manage what she previously could not.

These are just some simple examples of how paying attention to your natural modalities can be leveraged to improve perceived problems in your everyday life. Do you know what your natural modalities are? By discovering your modalities—and managing them—you may find effective ways to accomplish what you previously thought was unimaginable.

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