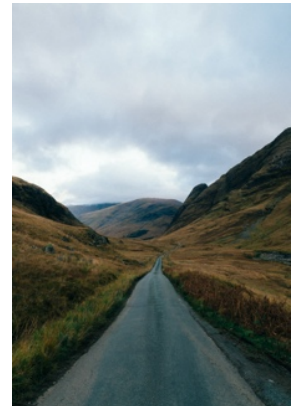


THE XYZ COACHING MAP

A Life Journey Orientation Tool

Dust Kunkel, ACC (International Coaching Federation)



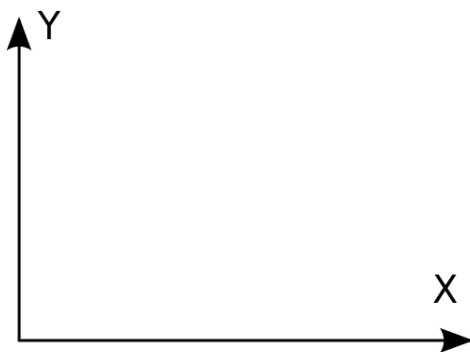
INTRODUCTION

Most of us made it through high school Algebra unscathed -- some of us even turned equations and graphs into a profession! Still, we rarely apply this 3-dimension concept to our own life journey. This document introduces you to a pathway for integrating X) your life-story, and Y) your life-values, with Z) your goals for your future that integrate with X and Y.

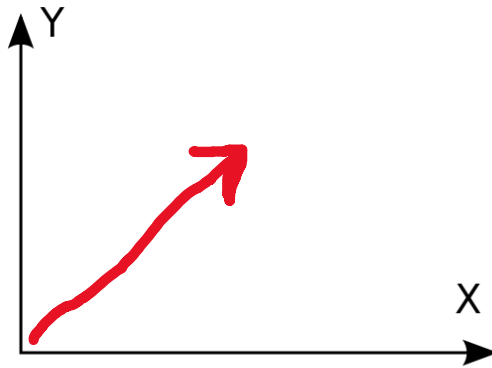
Yep, that's the structure right there. It's not rocket science (although rockets get there and back using the XYZ graphing approach!). It's what you do with *The XYZ Coaching Map* – plus its basic structure -- that determines its effectiveness.

Remember, it's a *life journey orientation tool*. To be useful, tools require a user. But first, a quick walk through:

Notice the X-Y axis below. Think of X being the line that captures my life story, my history, the impact of all the events of my life on my “me-ness.” Now consider the Y (you can also think of it as “WHY”). The Y is appropriately vertical because my “WHY” – my core set of values -- is the backbone of all that I am.

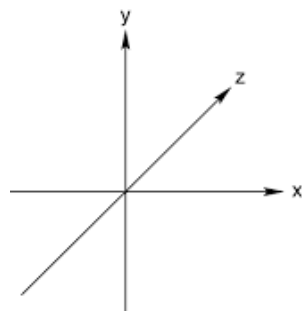


What happens to this two-dimension concept of myself when I add the third line, the “Z?” It suddenly takes on a three-dimension perspective, like I draw below (I’m pretending we’re sitting in a café and all I have is a napkin and, strangely, a red marker!):



The red arrow is my Z. It’s the active arrow that integrates my Y and my X into actual 3-D movement forward through a goal-setting and accountable structure, based on who I am (my Y) and where I’ve been (my X). This is *The XYZ Coaching Map*.

Just in case my crude drawing doesn’t give you a real 3-D perspective, here’s what a legit XYZ coordinate graph looks like:



Isn’t that a *way* better visual than my drawing?

A coach with a credential from the [International Coach Federation \(ICF\)](https://www.icf.org/) --whether he or she uses this particular structure or not -- will partner with you to grow and make things happen in each of the X, Y, or Z areas of your life. You’ll articulate X,Y,

and Z into a 3-D mental map of yourself that includes a plan to move forward towards a preferred future (my Z).

- Sometimes I need to dig into my X -- how my personal story, experiences, gifts, skills, and competencies make me who I am (a coach draws out all of these from you in a coaching conversation).
- Sometimes I need to clarify my Y -- the backbone of who I am, the set of values that, together, are essentially me (a coach draws out and helps me articulate what I am all about, when all the extraneous stuff gets thrown out and there is a handful of essentials remaining that make me, me).
- Sometimes I want to make things happen, to get stuff done, to engage my X and my Y into a pathway forward -- that's the Z! A coach walks with me, asks me powerful questions that draw out where I want to go and helps me articulate and follow through on my plan, step by step.
- Sometimes I need to step back and take account of all three lines, get a macro 3-dimension view of my life. A coach will do this with me too.

If you've gotten this far in *The XYZ Coaching Map, A Life Journey Orientation Tool*, I hope you noticed this: I'm not so much interested in gaining you as a client as I am helping you take a step forward in your life (even if it's just one little step today). *This is how I live out my personal Y.*

To be ultra-specific: I may not be the coach for you. The coach-client relationship is about finding a good match. You and I should definitely have a conversation to find this out! (If we're not a good match, I'm in a network of ICF-credentialed coaches – the very best at helping you move forward on your goals, and I'd be happy to refer you).

The XYZ Coaching Map is a simple structure I use with clients (when they find it useful) so they feel more oriented in the dizzying journey that is our lives. That's why I call it a "life journey orientation tool." With what you know right now, you don't need me to put its basic concepts to work in your life! (I will say, though, if you want to dig into *The XYZ Coaching Map* in detail, and gain traction on your goals, you'll need to work with me or another experienced ICF coach).

Part of living out my Y is sharing helpful knowledge with no strings attached. Yes, we all have to pay bills, and coaches need paying clients, but I'd rather start every relationship from a position of sharing and cooperation. That's why *The XYZ Coaching Map* is free, not just for you but for anyone (when you share, please let people know its origin and maker!).

If you'd like to know more about the ICF and its code of ethics, training expectations, and rigorous credential process, find out more here: [International Coaching Federation](#)

HOW TO USE THE REST OF THIS DOCUMENT

Below, you'll find each axis in *The XYZ Coaching Map* followed by a "taster" exercise. Give them a try! A map is not the terrain itself. A map -- whether its "old-school" paper, or on your smartphone -- is a tool for understanding the terrain, gaining helpful information, and getting from point X through Y to your Z.

Note: The exercises below are offered only as "tasters" to introduce the concepts of [The XYZ Coaching Map](#) through thoughtful self-perception. The exercises below are not coaching, and should not be considered a coaching model.



MY X (“TASTER” EXERCISE)



Go for a walk by yourself somewhere you feel comfortable.

Somewhere you can think freely.

On the walk, ponder these questions:



- What’s a favorite “mountain-top” moment in my life?
 - How has it affected me since that moment?
- What is one thing I am really good at?
 - How did that happen (that is, how did I get good at it)?

Return from your walk and spend some time freewriting your responses.

MY Y (“TASTER” EXERCISE)



Go for a walk by yourself somewhere you feel comfortable.

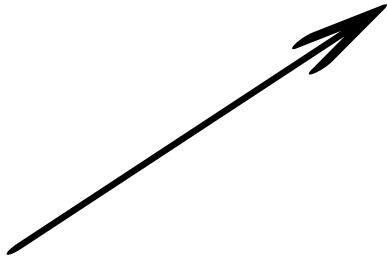
Somewhere you can think freely.

On the walk, ponder these questions:

- What are some activities I have done (work or hobby) that I lost track of time when I was doing them?
- How do I feel when I’m doing them? In other words, what makes them meaningful?

Return from your walk and spend some time freewriting your responses.

MY Z (“TASTER” EXERCISE)



Go for a walk by yourself somewhere you feel comfortable.

Somewhere you can think freely.

On the walk, ponder these questions:

- Knowing what I know about my X (personal story) and my Y (what I consider important, or values), where do I want to go? *Really – where do I want to go?!*
- What is just one thing I know that I can do to start moving in that direction? (If I’m already moving in that direction, what’s the *next thing* I can do to keep moving?)

Return from your walk and spend some time freewriting your responses.

About Dust Kunkel

With 10 years executive experience coaching leaders and teams, Dust Kunkel brings extensive leadership development, team management, program design, and communication expertise to his coaching relationships. Dust is a certified executive coach (ACC credential from the *International Coaching Federation*), a certified debriefer for *Harrison Assessments*, and holds a Masters in Experiential Education (by research) from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.



Dust grew up in Ghana, West Africa, the son of Lutheran development workers, and brings a multi-cultural perspective to coaching. “Because of living on two continents as a kid,” says Dust, “Walking with a coaching client comes naturally, I quickly see things from their point of view.”

“I’ve survived some bleak years, I viscerally get what it’s like to barely hold onto a dream, to be a dying ember. Coaching is how I partner with you to kindle your coals into a burning fire,” he says.

Dust is naturally curious, with a drive to be the last one standing in adversity. He calls this *the “problemsaresparks” mentality*. “Often,” he says, “the challenges we are most afraid of are the challenges that release the most creative energy when we face them courageously.” As a former whitewater raft guide, he knows how to help leaders face rough water and come out thriving.

Dust is not for everyone, no coach is. If you want a trustworthy coach who is honest, not into shortcuts, partners with you to face your obstacles and serve your dreams -- then you’ll find him a good match. Dust works best with leaders of every age who seek truth in their lives, who see *problems as sparks* for lighting their fire, who don’t mind a little pain for a lot of growth and joy.