CODE OF ETHICS

Thinus Maritz

Life Transformational Coach | Identity Growth Coach

Purpose

This Code of Ethics reflects the professional and personal standards I commit myself to in every coaching relationship.

It exists to protect the dignity, autonomy and wellbeing of my clients while ensuring that I practise with honesty, integrity and responsibility, and within the scope of my professional training, competence and accreditation.

My role is not to determine who a client should become, but to provide a respectful environment in which awareness, exploration, growth and meaningful change can take place.

1. Respect & Dignity

I will treat every client with dignity, respect and without judgement.

I recognise that every person brings their own experiences, beliefs, values, culture, identity and perspective to the coaching relationship.

I will respect those differences and will not discriminate against, belittle or intentionally undermine a client because their beliefs, values, background, identity or choices differ from my own.

My role is not to impose my beliefs, values or choices upon a client, but to create an environment where they can honestly explore their own.

2. Client Autonomy & Responsibility

I respect each client's right to make their own choices and take responsibility for their own life.

I may challenge beliefs, perspectives, assumptions or patterns where appropriate, but I will not make decisions for a client or attempt to control the direction of their life.

I encourage clients to recognise what is within their control, take ownership of their choices and consider the actions available to them.

My role is to provide guidance, awareness, challenge, perspective and appropriate tools. The client's choices, decisions and actions remain their own.

3. Integrity & Honesty

I will conduct myself honestly, transparently and with professional integrity.

I will represent my qualifications, accreditation, experience, services and professional scope accurately.

I will not knowingly make false or misleading claims about myself, my services, the methods I use or the outcomes that coaching may produce.

I will not guarantee specific personal, professional, financial, relational or emotional outcomes.

Where I make an error or recognise that I have communicated something inaccurately, I will take reasonable steps to acknowledge and correct it.

4. Professional Scope & Competence

I will work within the scope of my professional training, competence and accreditation.

I will not knowingly provide services or use methods that fall outside those boundaries.

I recognise the distinction between coaching and the diagnosis or treatment of addiction, serious mental-health concerns, medical conditions and other matters requiring appropriately qualified healthcare, mental-health or other professionals.

I will not allow my desire to help a client to become a reason for working beyond the boundaries of my competence.

Where a client's needs fall outside my professional scope or require expertise that I do not possess, I will communicate this openly and, where appropriate, encourage the client to seek assistance from a suitably qualified professional.

5. Responsible Use of Coaching Methods

I will use coaching methods, strategies and techniques within my professional scope responsibly and where I believe they are appropriate to the work being undertaken with the client.

Techniques are tools - they are not a substitute for listening to and understanding the individual in front of me.

Where relevant, our work may explore past experiences to better understand how they may have contributed to present beliefs, patterns, emotions, behaviours or the way a client sees themselves.

The purpose of exploring the past is not to remain there or repeatedly revisit pain, unfairness or difficult experiences without meaningful direction. Where the past is relevant, we explore what is necessary to develop greater awareness of the present and create a clearer path forward.

My coaching remains focused primarily on where the client is now, who they choose to become, what they want to create, and the actions that can move them toward that desired outcome.

I will explain exercises, processes and techniques sufficiently for the client to understand what is being asked of them and, where appropriate, why it forms part of the coaching process.

The coaching journey requires active participation and commitment from the client. This may include completing agreed exercises, engaging honestly in the coaching process, reflecting between sessions and being willing to explore areas that may at times feel challenging or uncomfortable.

I will respect a client's boundaries and will not coerce them into participating in an exercise or technique. However, respecting a client's boundaries does not remove the commitment they have made to actively participate in the coaching process.

Where a client is reluctant to participate in an agreed part of the process, we may explore that reluctance together. Resistance itself may provide valuable awareness and an opportunity for further exploration.

Where a client repeatedly chooses not to participate in agreed exercises or demonstrates an ongoing unwillingness to engage with the coaching process, we will openly discuss whether continuing the coaching relationship remains appropriate.

Where appropriate, I will adapt my approach to the individual rather than expecting every client to respond to the same method in the same way.

6. Exploration, Learning & Self-Discovery

I encourage clients to explore, question and reflect on the concepts, frameworks, exercises and insights introduced during coaching.

Where appropriate, clients may be invited to observe these ideas within their own lives and experiences rather than accepting them simply because they were presented during a coaching session.

Resources, handouts, examples, exercises and frameworks may be provided to support awareness, learning and exploration. They are intended to open possibilities rather than prescribe answers.

A resource or example is not necessarily exhaustive, nor does it define the choices available to the client.

Clients are encouraged to explore what is meaningful, relevant and useful within their own lives and to develop greater awareness through their own observations and experiences.

7. Authenticity Without Imposition

I believe deeply in authentic living. However, authenticity does not mean imposing my understanding of life upon someone else.

I will support clients in discovering what matters to them, recognising their own values and beliefs, and making choices that are authentically their own.

At times, I may share examples from my own life, experiences or personal learning to illustrate a concept, offer perspective or help a client consider possibilities they may not previously have considered.

These examples are shared for reflection and exploration - not as instructions for how a client should live their life or what choices they should make.

My experiences are my own, just as the client's experiences are theirs. What was meaningful or helpful in my journey may not necessarily be appropriate for theirs.

My personal beliefs and worldview belong to me. I will respect the client's right to theirs.

8. Confidentiality, Privacy & Records

I recognise confidentiality as an essential foundation of trust within the coaching relationship. Information shared with me by a client will be treated as private and confidential and handled with care and respect.

I may maintain appropriate records relating to coaching sessions and the coaching relationship. Whether maintained physically or electronically, these records and other personal information entrusted to me will be handled responsibly and with reasonable safeguards intended to protect them from unauthorised access, use, loss or disclosure.

I will endeavour to collect, record, retain and use client information only where there is an appropriate purpose connected to the coaching relationship, my professional responsibilities or applicable legal requirements.

I will not disclose a client's personal information to another person merely because that person requests it. Where a client wishes information to be shared with another party, appropriate consent and authorisation will be required.

Confidentiality is, however, not absolute. There may be circumstances in which disclosure is required or permitted by applicable South African law, including where I am required to comply with a valid court order or other lawful requirement.

There may also be circumstances involving a serious and immediate concern for the safety of the client or another person where appropriate action needs to be considered. In such circumstances, I will exercise reasonable professional judgement, within the boundaries of my competence and professional scope, in determining the appropriate course of action and will have regard to applicable South African law.

Where disclosure becomes necessary, I will endeavour to disclose only information that is reasonably necessary for the lawful or protective purpose concerned and will continue to respect the client's privacy as far as reasonably possible.

The specific collection, storage, protection, retention, access and lawful disclosure of personal information and coaching records will be addressed more fully in the Privacy Policy and Client Agreement.

9. Referral & Additional Professional Support

Where a client's needs fall outside my professional scope or require additional professional support, I will communicate this openly and, where appropriate, encourage the client to seek assistance from an appropriately qualified professional.

Because I work with clients internationally and primarily through digital coaching, I may not always be in a position to identify or recommend an appropriate practitioner within the client's location. The client may therefore need to identify and engage an appropriately qualified professional themselves.

Seeking or receiving additional professional support does not automatically end the coaching relationship.

Where appropriate, coaching may continue alongside psychological, psychiatric, medical, addiction-related or other professional support, provided that the work undertaken through coaching remains within my professional scope and the client is sufficiently able to participate safely and meaningfully in the coaching process.

Where another condition or treatment may materially affect a client's ability to participate in coaching, I may require sufficient relevant information to determine whether continuing coaching is appropriate. I do not require unnecessary details regarding a client's diagnosis, treatment or medication where those details are not relevant to that determination.

Where appropriate, and with the client's informed consent, communication or coordination with another professional involved in the client's care may be requested to help establish whether continuing coaching alongside that professional support is appropriate and is not known to interfere with the treatment being provided.

I will respect the professional scope, confidentiality requirements and independent judgement of the other professional.

Where this cannot yet reasonably be established, coaching may be temporarily paused while appropriate support is established or sufficient clarification is obtained.

Where a client is not presently able to participate meaningfully in coaching because of active addiction, significant impairment, an acute mental-health concern or another matter outside my professional scope, I will not attempt to treat that condition through coaching.

Coaching may be reconsidered when appropriate professional support has been established and the client is sufficiently able to participate meaningfully in the coaching process.

I will not diagnose conditions, prescribe medication, recommend changes to medication, advise clients to discontinue prescribed treatment or substitute my judgement for that of an appropriately qualified healthcare or mental-health professional.

10. Responsibility & Impact

I believe that meaningful transformation includes personal responsibility.

Taking responsibility does not mean denying what has happened to us, excusing the actions of others or pretending that circumstances have not affected us.

It means developing the awareness to recognise what is within our control and taking responsibility for the choices and actions that follow.

I will encourage clients to consider not only what feels authentic to them, but also the potential consequences of their choices and actions.

This can include consideration of their impact on other people, relationships, communities, society and the wider environment where relevant.

Authenticity and responsibility should work together.

11. Professional Boundaries & Impartiality

I will maintain appropriate professional boundaries and endeavour to remain neutral and impartial within the coaching relationship.

I will treat each client as an individual and will not allow my personal opinions, relationships, interests or prior knowledge of another person to determine how I approach that client's coaching journey.

Where I work with clients who have an existing relationship with one another - including spouses, partners, family members, friends or business associates - I will respect the individuality and confidentiality of each coaching relationship and remain alert to circumstances that could compromise my neutrality or professional judgement.

I will not use information disclosed confidentially by one client to influence another client's coaching relationship without appropriate consent or another lawful and professionally justified basis.

I will not knowingly exploit a client's trust, vulnerability or dependence for romantic, sexual, emotional, financial, business or other inappropriate personal benefit.

The coaching relationship should support increasing awareness, responsibility and self-leadership - not dependency upon the coach.

12. Conflicts of Interest

I will remain aware of situations in which personal, professional, financial or other interests could interfere with my ability to serve a client fairly and professionally.

Where such an interest could reasonably interfere with my impartiality, confidentiality, professional judgement or ability to serve the client appropriately, I will acknowledge and address the potential conflict.

Where a conflict cannot reasonably be managed, I may decline, pause or end the coaching relationship.

13. Professional Communication, Feedback & Ethical Concerns

I welcome honest feedback regarding a client's experience of the coaching relationship and recognise feedback as an important part of maintaining and developing the quality of my professional practice.

Clients will have opportunities to provide feedback throughout the coaching process and are encouraged to communicate concerns openly where they feel comfortable doing so.

If a client believes that I have acted inconsistently with the professional or ethical standards described in this Code, including concerns that I may have acted outside my professional scope, they are encouraged to raise the matter directly with me.

I will take such concerns seriously, consider them fairly and respond with professionalism and respect.

My designated business email address and business WhatsApp number may be used for appropriate communication relating to the coaching relationship. This may include reasonable clarification regarding agreed exercises or assignments, practical matters relating to the coaching process, feedback or concerns regarding my professional or ethical conduct.

These communication channels are provided for professional purposes and reasonable support between coaching sessions. They are not intended to provide unlimited access to me, ongoing coaching outside scheduled sessions, emergency or crisis support, or communication unrelated to the professional coaching relationship.

My coaching services, business email and WhatsApp communication are not emergency or crisis services.

Where a client is experiencing an immediate crisis or emergency, appropriate emergency, medical, mental-health or other qualified professional support should be sought.

Following a crisis, and where the client is sufficiently able to participate and the work remains within my professional scope, coaching may later provide an appropriate environment to explore the impact of what occurred and support the client's self-development and forward direction.

Where communication requires substantial coaching, deeper exploration or work that cannot reasonably be addressed through email or WhatsApp, it may be carried forward into an appropriate coaching session.

Where feedback identifies an area in which my professional practice can reasonably be improved, I will reflect upon it and take appropriate action where necessary.

14. Continuing Professional Responsibility

I accept responsibility for maintaining and developing my professional competence.

I will remain aware of the boundaries of my knowledge, training and experience.

I will seek further learning, professional development, appropriate guidance or additional training where necessary to maintain the quality and integrity of my work.

My accreditation is not a reason to stop learning. It is a responsibility to continue developing the knowledge and competence with which I serve my clients.

15. Pausing or Ending a Coaching Relationship

I recognise that continuing a coaching relationship is not always appropriate or in the client's best interests.

A coaching relationship may need to be reviewed or temporarily paused where additional professional support is required, where the client's present circumstances significantly affect their ability to participate, or where clarification is required regarding whether continuing coaching remains appropriate.

A referral or temporary pause should not automatically be regarded as a failure of the client, a failure of the coaching process or the permanent end of the coaching relationship.

Where I believe that I am no longer the appropriate person to support a client's needs, that continuing would take me outside my professional scope, that a significant professional conflict cannot reasonably be managed, or that another form of professional support would be more appropriate, I will communicate this honestly and respectfully.

Where appropriate, coaching may resume when the circumstances that required the pause have been appropriately addressed and continuing the relationship falls within my professional scope.

Where continuing the coaching relationship would no longer be professionally appropriate, I may end the relationship and communicate the reasons for doing so respectfully.

My Ethical Commitment

I will not attempt to define who you should be.

My responsibility is to walk beside you with honesty, respect and professional integrity as you explore what has shaped you, reconnect with who you are, discover what matters to you and take responsibility for who you choose to become.

I can provide the environment, guidance, challenge, perspectives and tools - but **your journey remains yours.**

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