

Thinking *Beyond* the Walls

Exploring the cognitive benefits of coaching in naturally restorative environments.

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This research builds on Kaplan's attention restoration theory (1995) and Fredrickson's broaden & build theory (2001).

Kaplan describes the elements of a naturally restorative environment (NRE) as: *being away from daily stressors, in a larger space, somewhere naturally fascinating & compatible with the individual (needs & preferences)* 🌳.

Research questions

- 1) What are the effects of taking coaching offline and into naturally restorative environments on participant (PP) thinking? (Kaplan).
- 2) What elements of coaching in a NRE may enhance focus and facilitate deeper or expansive thinking? (Fredrickson).

Coaching intervention: 3 sessions with 4 participants



Session 1 = online



Session 2 = outdoors in a NRE via 



Session 3 = outdoors in a NRE via 



Data collection: PP written reflection after each session & final interview.

Key insights so far - what participants have said....

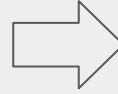
*Outside there are **no walls**!! Inside, the walls limit my thinking.
It was helpful to **draw analogies from nature**.
The **fresh air** and **natural light** made me **feel present** and **alert**.
It was **nice not to sit in front of a screen** and **be looked at**!
Walking **helped me feel free-er to think outside of the box** more.
A dog distracted me / a large puddle **distracted me but not for long**.*



Practice observation: recurring client challenge = cognitive overload impacting their thinking in sessions.



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**Action
Research**



What *elements* of a coaching session might support cognitive restoration & expand client thinking?



Curious question for you as a 'thought partner': In

a world of cognitive overload.... **what if** stepping out into nature for coaching conversations **could** aid focus and unlock deeper thinking for your clients (and you!)?



What shifts in *your* thinking when you coach beyond the screen, walls & self consciousness?

References: Kaplan, S. (1995). The restorative benefits of nature: Toward an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15(3), 169-182.
Fredrickson, B. (2001), The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions, *American Psychological Association*, Vol. 56. No. 3, 218-226